

Submitter: Joyce DeMonnin

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB2800

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer, Sosa, and Members of the Committee,

I am a lifelong Oregonian. and I support HB 2800. I personally have met dozens of Oregonians over 50 or 60 who got downsized at work and had a very difficult time finding a job or even getting interviews. US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that among job seekers 55 and older, roughly half have been out of work for 27 weeks or more, which puts them in the category of the? long-term unemployed. Cutesy phrases in job announcements like "Must be a digital native," is code that older people need not apply. I heard recently that a large Oregon city brought on 20 new employees, all of whom were 30 or younger. Older people weren't even considered.

This is a disgrace. Age discrimination in the workplace is more common than you think. The combination of being a woman and older makes it doubly hard to find and retain jobs. The last 15 years of work should be your highest earning years, but for some individuals, losing a job during this precious window means losing your home as well. Consider that 19% of homeless people Multnomah County are older adults. Older adults should have the right to work as desired to maintain financial security and to continue contributing to the community.

Older individuals need to have the same tools to address age discrimination as people in other protected classes. It's unfair that every other group has recourse against discrimination in employment. Employers do have the right to not hire an unqualified person. That's not the question here. It's just time to even the playing field for all Oregonians and stop ageism in employment - and hopefully everywhere else as well. Stand up against ageism and vote to report out with a "do pass" recommendation HB2800.

Sincerely,

Joyce DeMonnin
Portland, Oregon