



February 6, 2023

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

On behalf of the American Association of University Women of Oregon (AAUW of OR), we express our strong support for House Bill 2800.

Discrimination based on age is unfortunately commonplace. The mantra goes like this: once you reach age 50 or 55, you should give way to younger employees. It's time to move on and allow someone younger to fill your job slot.

And history is repeating itself too. Not too long ago it was perfectly acceptable to say women shouldn't be in the workforce because they would be taking jobs away from men. Thankfully we have made some progress on that front, but now older workers are commonly seen to be taking jobs away from younger workers just because of their age.

I have spoken to a number of our AAUW of OR members and this is a topic we all unfortunately recognize. For example,

- One of our members worked as a mental health care provider with 25 years of experience. She was well respected for her work, but she had to briefly interrupt her career due to illness. When she tried to return to employment after fully recovering, with no lasting effects, she found she no longer had a place in the hospital where she had worked. She was too old and the hospital had "moved on."
- Or the nurse who treated a 55-year-old woman who was desperate because she had lost her job, her insurance was ending and she couldn't get another job because prospective employers wanted a younger looking office manager/receptionist.
- Another woman was laid off at age 63 from her job as a legal secretary because she was older than another employee and she was earning more. She had in fact trained the younger employee. It took her several months to find a new job, but the only one she could find was parttime.

Plainly said, bias and inequity in the workplace are bias and inequity in the workplace, whether the employee is older or a member of another protected class.

We urge the passage of House Bill 2800.

Respectfully Submitted,

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