

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

I am in strong support of HB 2800. Discrimination in the workplace is unacceptable. Age continues to be a focus of discrimination when people are living longer than any other time in history. Retirement is pushed further into the future while savings, if people have it, are being used for medical expenses, housing, and inflation in the cost of living.

There need to be more protections with companies having the ability to ask plausible deniability questions in age discrimination such as university graduation dates. People are not retiring, or are unable to retire, in their 50s or 60s anymore. Someone cannot get full Social Security benefits until they're in their late 60s, so if a person were to start at a company at 60, they are still devoting years in the workforce. Looking at Congress and our own President, people are working in their 80s.

People are entering the workforce or changing careers at later stages in their lives. Gone are the days of people staying in one company for the entirety of their career. Because of age, people are being discriminated as they enter/reenter the workforce after raising children or escaping domestic violence where power and control was in place over financial resources. People become disabled and may need to have occupational rehabilitation to start in a new industry. The old idea of people settling into their golden years no longer exists for many Americans. What matters in a position is if a person is competent and willing to learn, not their age. There needs to be opportunities for everyone regardless of age as diversity creates stronger companies, organizations, and communities. Thank you for your time.

Best regards,

Shawna Neumeister  
Astoria, Oregon