

February 4, 2023

Dear Chairman Holvey and Members of the House Business & Labor Committee,

I am writing to you in support of HB2800. There has been a lot of progress toward correcting workplace age discrimination, both with Federal & Oregon state laws. However, it is now time to strengthen, narrowing down the existing Oregon state law.

I have personally experienced age discrimination in the workplace. I forced to take a position out of the area where I created a new electronic calibration program. A much younger & more photogenic person what giving my position and went on to take credit for the same program, getting an article & picture in the news taking credit. The longer I worked for the company, the longer it took me to get promotions, getting passed over by younger workers. Employees should be evaluated based on their work performance, not on their age. Factors of paying an older worker with more experience work should not factor in higher wages nor the time left before retirement and cost of paying out pensions.

Older workers who have taken an early retirement or forced from the workplace by downsizing have trouble getting an equivalent job or even an interview if their age is over 50. I have personally experienced this type of discrimination wondering why my experience is not enough. Most of the work that I did was very high tech, which is very hard to get into if you are an older person, it is perceived to be a much younger worker field. After leaving the workplace at an age too young to retire and too old to get a foot in the door for a decent paying job & earning a living to support my dependents and my home was negatively impacted.

There is a bias and preconceived notion of how an older person might not be able to complete against the younger employee regardless of experience. Age-discrimination against older workers is very costly to the United States financial bottom line.

By restricting employers to require applicants to disclose their age or graduation date prior to completing the initial interview gives potential employees more equity at the beginning of process. As an added benefit it will allow employers that use a program to narrow down the search criteria a more diverse applicant base.

We need to fix the State's workplace age discrimination law, so all workers are treated fairly based on their qualifications, not their age. HB2800 will make it easier to be heard and taken more seriously in the eyes of the court system by clarifying the definition of age-related discrimination. I urge you to support HB2800 by voting for its passage.

Thank You,  
Rebecca Hayes  
Woodburn, Oregon