

Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Sharf, and members of the committee, my name is Stephanie Hooper, and I testify today in strong support of HB 3497.

I represent AGE+, a statewide nonprofit dedicated to empowering communities to value and care for older adults and their support networks. We do this through sharing our expertise in the field of aging, innovative programs, developing accessible affordable housing, and collaborating on efforts to make Oregon an Age-Friendly state.

The demographic shift that is here is not abstract—it will shape every part of our lives: where we live, how we work, our future economy, and the services we rely on. No sector—health care, housing, workforce, education—will be untouched, especially in our rural counties.

HB 3497 establishes a Shared Future Oregon task force comprised of relevant state agency representatives in strong collaboration with the private sector, nonprofits and philanthropy to develop a multisector plan for aging in Oregon.

A multi-sector plan on aging (MPA) will initiate a cohesive strategy that leverages this longevity bonus for Oregon's economy while helping the most vulnerable older adults age well on their terms. Twenty-seven states already have similar planning efforts underway. Oregon, known for its entrepreneurial spirit, must not be left behind.

The proposed taskforce is called the Shared Future Task Force because it isn't just about older adults. We are ALL aging and interconnected across generations. My mother's, grandmother's and daughter's needs and contributions affect my life as much as my needs, abilities as a caregiver and provider affect theirs.

Let's face it - Aging is typically seen as a deficit-based proposition - something to avoid and delay. As a result, we've ignored what the data, experts and advocates have been telling us for decades.

But now, it is beyond time to address this shift to avoid a crisis for all generations.

To give you a sense of why we need a comprehensive approach, it's important to recognize that older adults are not a monolith - we have several cohorts among

us. Typically, 55–70-year-olds very much remain in the workforce as vital contributors and skilled workers. Most want to stay engaged and will need to continue working for financial reasons. **We need them.** There simply aren't enough 18-25 year olds in the pipeline to meet the workforce demands. This will require innovative strategies around job design, adult education models, and retention efforts.

Those elders who are not in paid positions, say the 70-85 are a tremendous resource to communities as volunteers, mentors, supporting youth & families. Yet we don't have scaled systems to welcome and embrace their talents and lived experiences.

And I want to be clear that these age ranges are **illustrative** and not intended to set boundaries on abilities by age. My 96-year-old Grandmother does more for her neighbors and community than the average adult.

And for the oldest among us, as our health and mobility decline, we must also have a vision to strengthen and expand our community support, prevent isolation so that we age with dignity, safety and respect.

HB 3497 initiates a pathway to develop a strategic roadmap, based on 5 bold goal areas working across sectors in a public and private collaboration to ensure that all Oregonians—at every stage of life—can age well in our communities. I urge your support for HB 3497—because this truly is about **our Shared Future as Oregonians.**