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**Testimony in Support of HB 2818
Before the House Committee on Business and Labor**

March 13^h, 2019

Chair Barker, Vice-Chairs Barreto and Bynum, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2818, which would improve Oregon's protections against age discrimination in employment. The bill would better implement current statutory provisions which have long codified Oregon's intent that age not be a factor in employment decisions.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. The vast majority of our clients have incomes at or below the federal poverty level, and work hard to provide the basic necessities for themselves and their family. Despite Oregon's recent economic recovery, many vulnerable low-income people continue to struggle to make ends meet. Oregon's housing crisis has exacerbated the challenges for our low-income community, and an increasing number of our clients are forced to make terrible choices between paying for rent, food, medicine, or other necessities.

Stable employment is one protection against falling into crisis. Our seniors are especially vulnerable – nationally, an increasing number of seniors are aging into poverty and homelessness. This trajectory impacts women and people of color disproportionately.¹

There is no place for age discrimination as a barrier to employment for older Oregonians who are capable of and seeking work. HB 2818 helps to remove barriers, to ensure that our state's older populations do not face discrimination in seeking or maintaining employment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Sybil Hebb

¹ <http://www.justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Homelessness-Older-Adults.pdf>