

# AGE DISCRIMINATION IN OREGON: A SURVEY OF ADULTS AGES 40+

March 2019



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## KEY FINDINGS

# Key Findings

**More than three in five Oregonians ages 40+ (62%)** have seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace.

Older workers in Oregon are being **asked for age-related information** in the job application and interview processes; 62 percent of job seekers have been asked for this information on an application and a third (33%) of those who were interviewed were asked for age-related information.

**Official reporting of age discrimination is low (8%)**, but the majority say they would report age discrimination if they experienced it in the next year (62%).

**Strong support exists for strengthening laws** related to age discrimination, including stronger Oregon laws and a new Oregon law that would prohibit employers from asking for age-related information in the job application process.



*Sample includes 1,000 Oregonians ages 40+, who are either working or looking for work.*

# Application for Employment

Please fill out form completely for employment consideration. Print and complete.

Position Applied For:

Social Security No.:

Full legal

Last Name

Home street

E-mail Address:

Education:

Highest school grade

Do you have a high school

of years of post high

tion of

ion:

Degree received

## AGE DISCRIMINATION IN THE JOB SEARCH

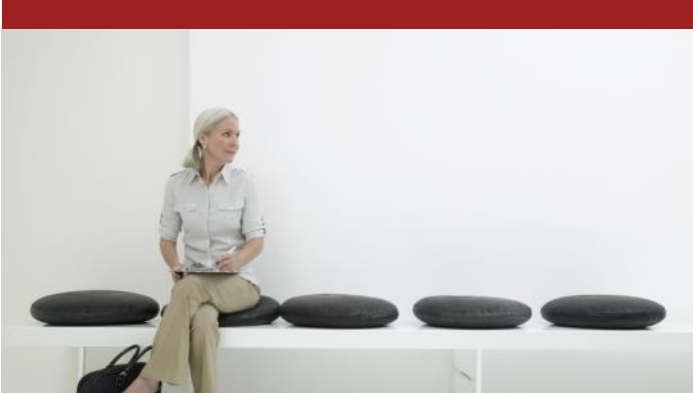
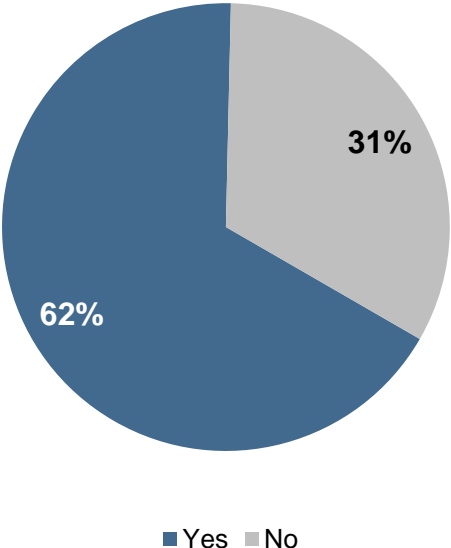
# Age identification begins in the application process.

Just over one-third (35%) of older workers in Oregon applied for a job in the past two years. Nearly two-thirds of those (62%) were asked for a birth date, graduation date, or some other type of age-related information during the application process.

### Applied for a job



### Asked for age-related information



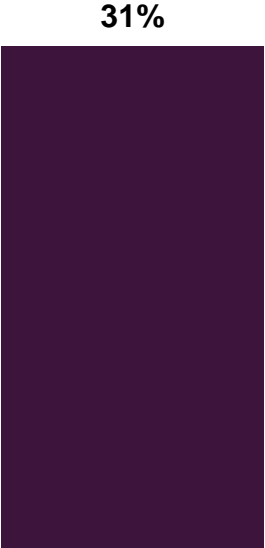
Q6A. In the past two years, have you taken either of the following job or career steps? Applied for a job. Base: Total respondents.

Q7a. In the past two years, have you been asked to provide your birth date, graduation date(s), or any other age-related information during the application process? Base: Have applied for a job in the past two years; n=307.

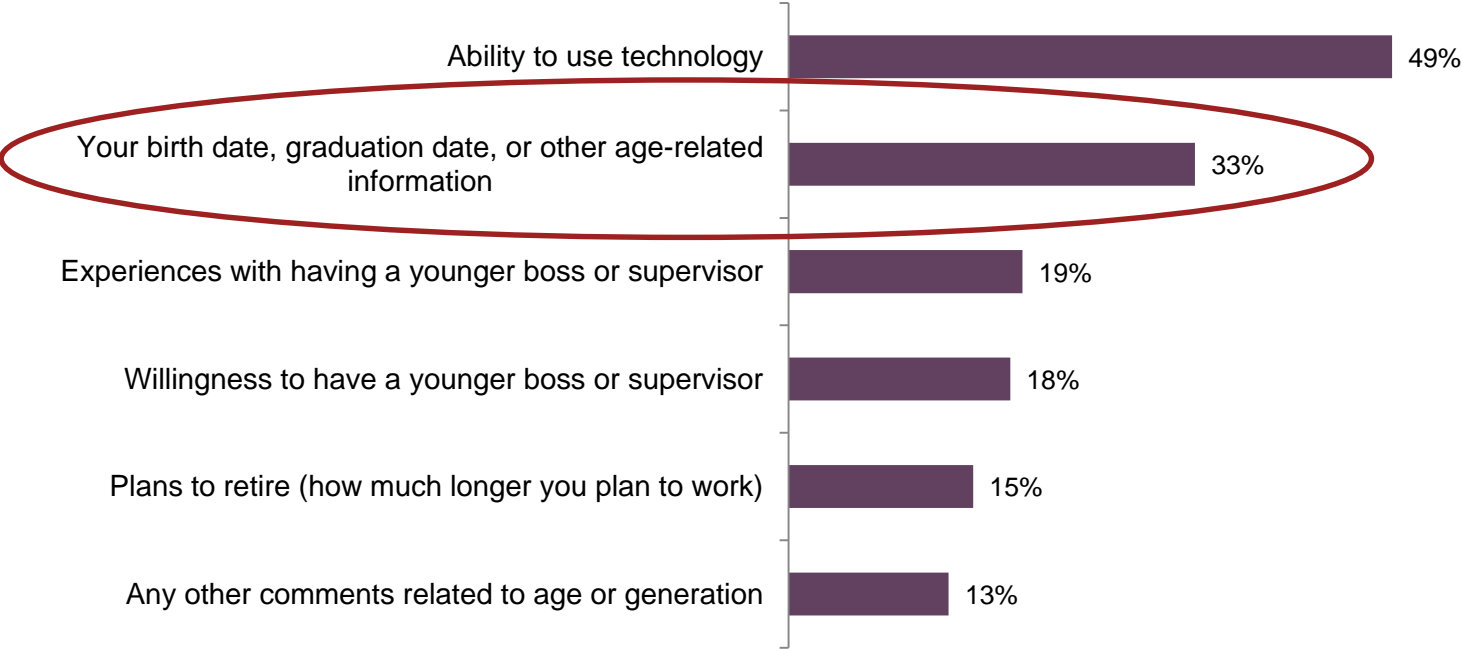
# Age identification continues into the interview process.

Nearly a third of older workers in Oregon went on a job interview in the past two years (31%). Of those, 33 percent were asked about age-related dates and half (49%) were asked about their ability to use technology.

## Went on a job interview



## Topics covered during the interview process



Q6A. In the past two years, have you taken either of the following job or career steps? Gone on a job interview. Base: Total respondents.

Q8. In the past two years, have you been asked about any of the following topics during the interview process? [ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES]. Base: Have been on an interview in the past two years; n=267.



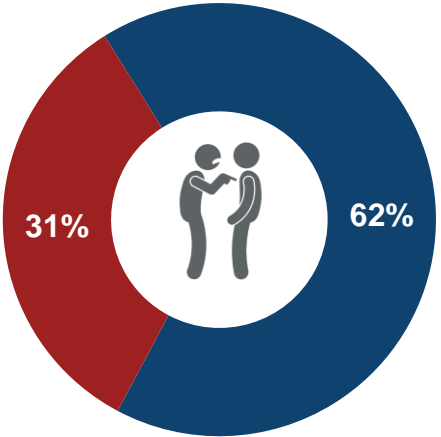
## **AGE DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE**



# About 3 in 5 have seen or experienced age discrimination.

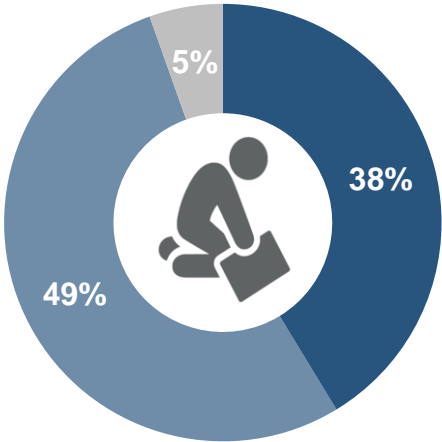
Sixty-two percent of older workers in Oregon have seen or experienced age discrimination in the workforce. Of this group, nearly 9 in 10 believe it is common: 38 percent indicate that it is *very* common and an additional half (49%) say it is *somewhat* common.

## Have seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace

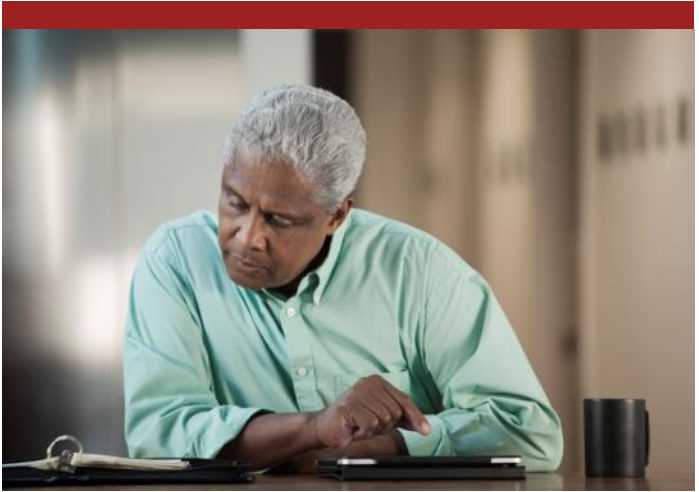


■ Yes ■ No

## Age discrimination is common



■ Very common ■ Somewhat common ■ Not too common



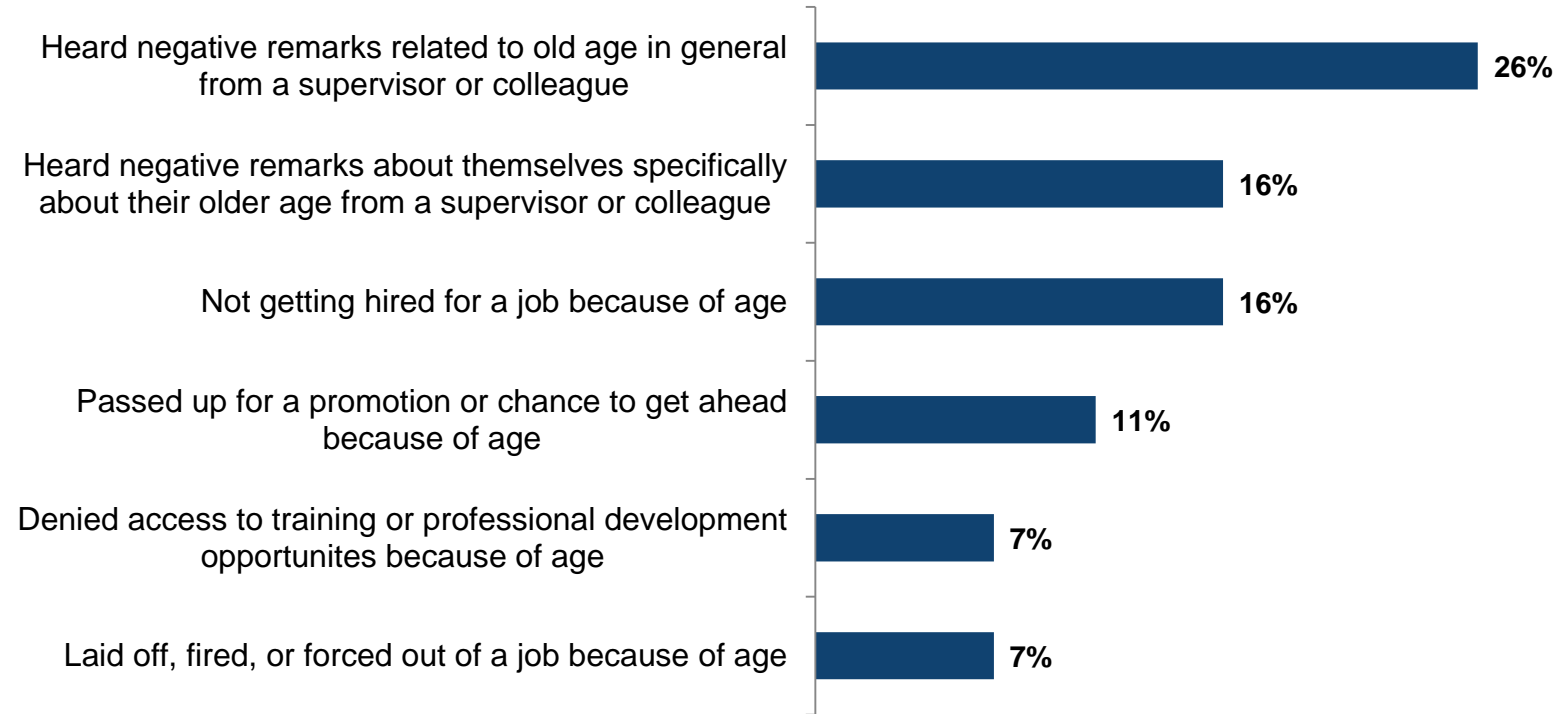
Q9. Based on what you have seen or experienced, do you think older workers face discrimination in the workplace today based on age? Base: Total respondents.

Q11. How common is age discrimination against older workers in the workplace today? Base: Think older workers face age discrimination in the workplace; n=611.

# Age-related comments top the list of experiences.

All respondents were asked about age discrimination as it related to specific workplace actions. Over one-quarter (26%) say they have experienced hearing negative, age-related remarks related to old age in general, one in six (16%) have heard negative, age-related remarks about themselves specifically, and 16 percent perceived that they did not get hired for a job they applied for because of their age. Other specific experiences were selected by less than 15 percent of respondents. (See chart below).

## Experience with specific age-discriminatory practices



Q14. Please tell me whether any of the following has happened to you at work since turning 40. Base: Total respondents.

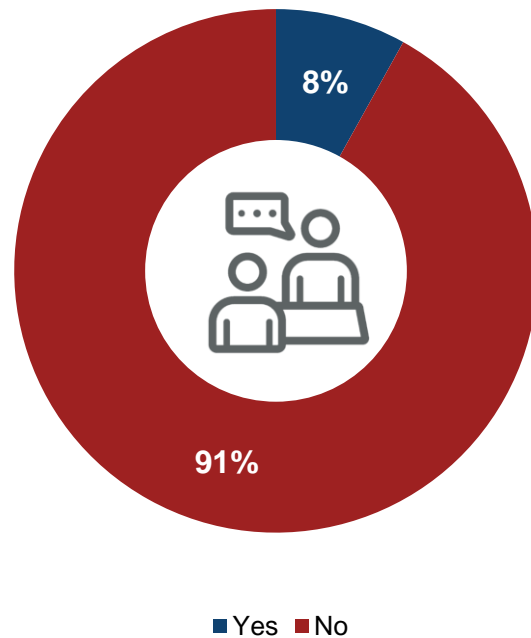


# REPORTING OF AGE DISCRIMINATION

# Reporting of age discrimination is low.

Although 62% of older workers in Oregon have seen or experienced age discrimination, a mere 8 percent of those have made an official report to a supervisor, human resources representative, a government agency, or another organization.

## Made an official report of age discrimination

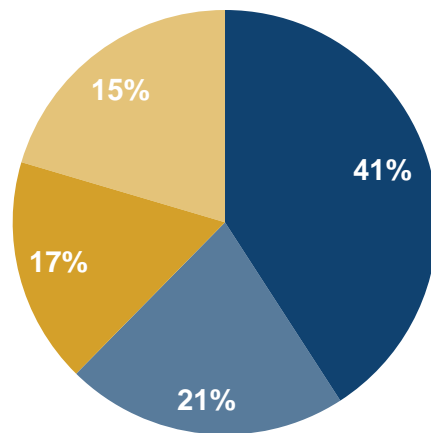


Q13. Have you ever made a complaint to a supervisor, Human Resources representative, a government agency, or another organization about age discrimination that you have seen or experienced in the workplace? Base: Have seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace; n=611.

# In the future, more say they would report age discrimination.

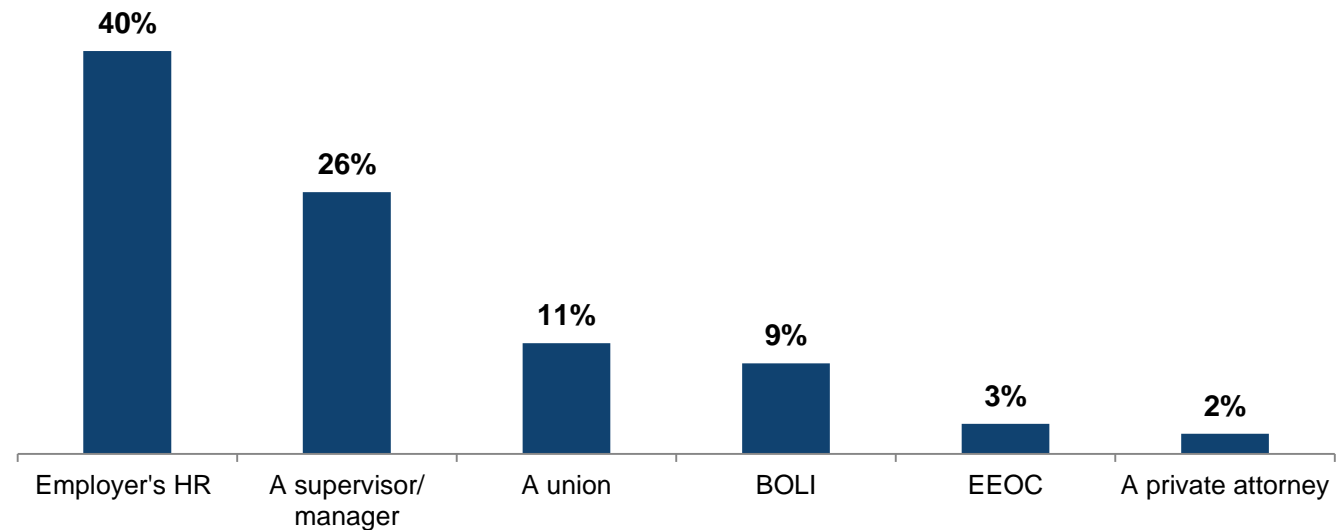
While most older workers in Oregon (62%) say they would be likely to report any age discrimination they experience in the coming year, few actually do report (8%; see Slide 12). The entities to which they are most likely to report age discrimination are the HR department, followed by a supervisor/upper level manager, a union, and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI).

**Likelihood of reporting age discrimination**



■ Very likely ■ Somewhat likely ■ Not too likely ■ Not at all likely

**Top-of-mind reporting entities**



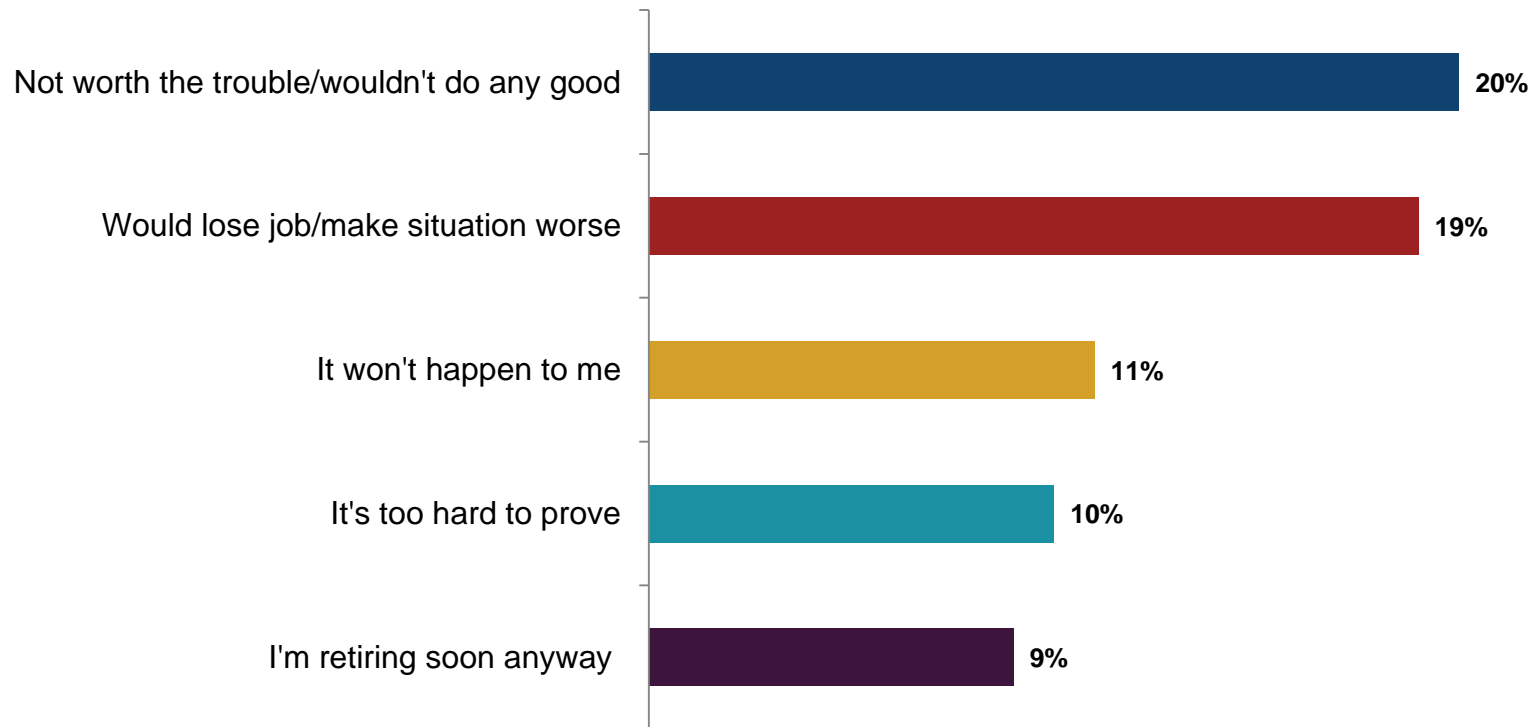
Q15. If in the next year you felt that you were discriminated against at work based on your age, how likely is it that you would report the incident to any person or organization? Base: Not self-employed; n=715.

Q16a1. Please tell me the FIRST place you would report suspected age discrimination. This could be a person, department, or organization. Base: Very likely or somewhat likely to report age discrimination in the next year (excludes self-employed); n=435.

# Fear and pessimism are top reasons why workers would *not* report age discrimination.

For the 32 percent of older workers in Oregon who say they would not report age discrimination if it happened to them in the future, the top reasons are that it is “not worth the trouble”/“wouldn’t do any good” (20%) and that they “would lose their job”/“make their situation worse” (19%).

## Top five reasons for not reporting potential age discrimination

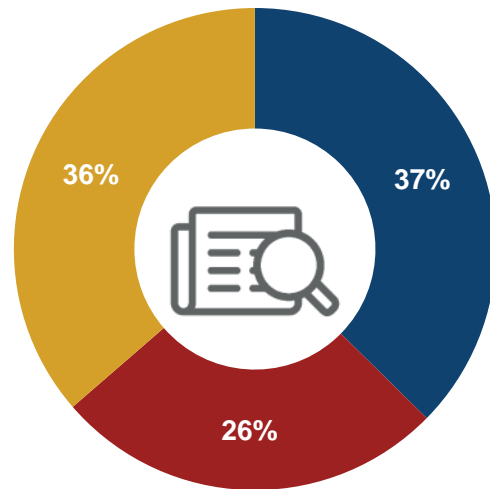


Q18. Please briefly describe why you would not report any age discrimination that you might experience in the workplace [open end]. Base: Not too likely or not at all likely to report age discrimination (excludes self-employed); n=235.

# Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries is top-of-mind for nearly two in five.

While only 9 percent of workers identify the BOLI as their first top-of-mind place to report age discrimination, a total of 37 percent list it in their top three places to report. Thirty-six percent are not aware that BOLI investigates complaints of age discrimination and 26 percent are aware that BOLI investigates complaints of age discrimination but would not turn to them as one of their top three resources.

## Awareness of BOLI as investigator of age discrimination



- BOLI is a top three resource
- Aware that BOLI investigates age discrimination
- Not aware that BOLI investigates age discrimination

Chart created from author calculations of Q16 and Q17. Base: Respondents indicating they would report future age discrimination and not self-employed; n=435.



Q16. Please tell me the FIRST place you would report suspected age discrimination. This could be a person, department, or organization. Is there a second place that you would report suspected age discrimination? Is there any other place you would report suspected age discrimination? Base: Respondents indicating they would report future age discrimination (excludes self-employed); n=435.

Q17. How aware are you that the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries investigates complaints of age discrimination in the workforce? Base: Did not select BOLI in Q 16; n=275.



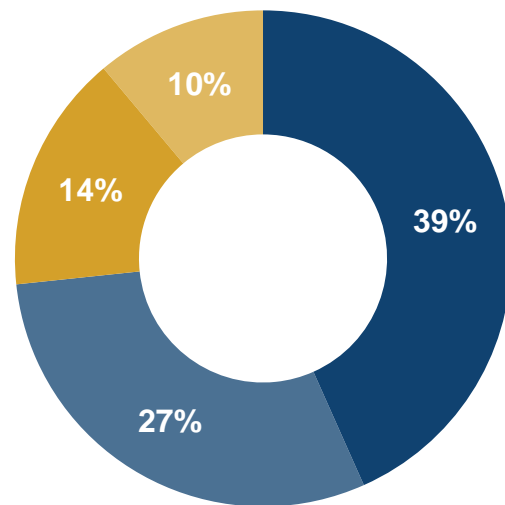
## **SUPPORT FOR LAWS TO FIGHT AGE DISCRIMINATION**



# Strong support for outlawing age inquiries on job applications.

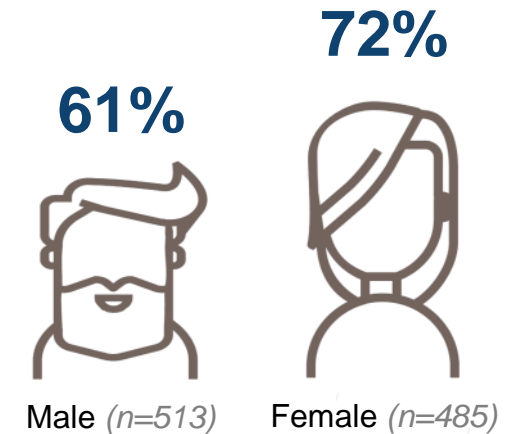
Two-thirds of Oregon's older workers would support a new law in the state that prohibits employers from asking about birth dates, graduation date(s), or other age-related information on a job application.

## Support for law prohibiting age-related inquiries on job applications



■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose

Women are more likely than men to say they would **support a law** prohibiting collection of age-related inquiries in the job application.

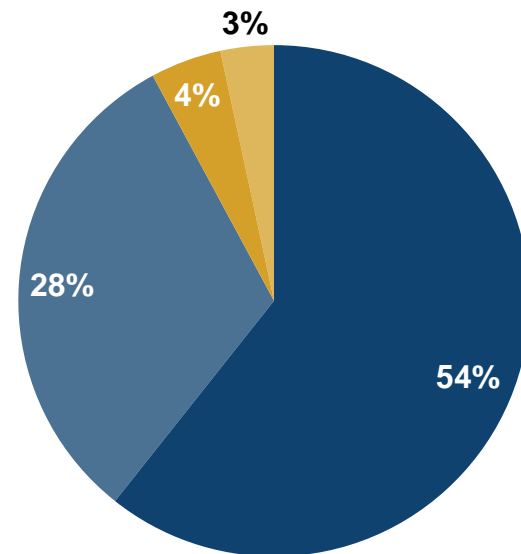


Q21. How would you feel about a new law in Oregon that prohibits employers from asking about birth dates, graduation date(s), or other age-related information on a job application?  
Base: Total respondents.

# Older workers want stronger age discrimination protections.

More than four in five (82%) of Oregon's older workers indicate that Oregon's age discrimination laws should be stronger. This, coupled with the desire for a new law related to age-related information, shows that older workers believe Oregon policymakers should take additional steps to protect equal opportunity for its older workforce.

## Support for stronger age discrimination laws in Oregon



■ Strongly support   ■ Somewhat support   ■ Somewhat oppose   ■ Strongly oppose



Q20. How would you feel about efforts to strengthen Oregon's age discrimination laws? Base: Total respondents.



# IMPLICATIONS

# Implications

Oregon's older workers are **concerned about age discrimination**. While many have seen or experienced it, **very few actually report** age discrimination. Oregon's age discrimination laws need to be strengthened to deter discrimination and alleviate fear of retaliation.

Oregon's older workers have experienced a variety of questionable employment **practices that enable age discrimination**, such as asking for age or other dates on job applications or during interviews. At a minimum, such inquiries deter older workers from applying. Moreover, many have also been **subjected to ageist comments** on the job. This behavior does not facilitate a welcoming or equitable workplace.

Oregon's older workforce believes the **state government should do more to protect** them, showing very strong support for laws outlawing employers from asking about age-related information during the application process.





# METHODOLOGY

# Methodology

- **Objectives:** To explore experiences of older Oregon workers and views on age discrimination legislation.
- **Methodology:** Telephone survey of Oregon residents.
- **Qualifications:** Age 40 or older; must be working or looking for work.
- **Sample:** Sample size is 1,000. Both landline and cell phone sampling were used for this research, drawn randomly from a purchased list of Oregon residents.
- **Interviewing Dates:** December 13-28, 2018.
- **Weighting:** The data are weighted to the civilian workforce by age, gender, and race/ethnicity according to 2018 CPS Census Bureau statistics.
- **Questionnaire length:** Mean 15 minutes
- **Margin of Error:** Total sample:  $\pm 3.1\%$





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This research was designed and executed by AARP Research