

I am writing to ask for your support for Amendment 1 to HB 2938 - Age Discrimination Task Force Legislation - and for a change that would add at least 2 more advocate/consumer representatives to the Task Force. At least one Advocate would represent Seniors and one would represent Persons with disabilities. If another representative from small business is needed to add balance to the membership, I am not opposed to that.

We have found in Task Force work that no one group can present the diversity of issues and possible solutions that face these populations in seeking and maintaining employment or any other kind of participation of seniors and persons with disabilities in civic life. For too long, these populations have been a silent presence in the Oregon communities such as employment.

This model of broad stakeholder participation has been a staple in the development of public policy and legislation to bring elderly and persons with disabilities into the mainstream of community living in Oregon. Over the past 30 years, Oregon has developed a Long Term Services and Support (LTSS) system for elderly and persons with disabilities that is the model for the nation in that it promotes independent living, choice and dignity for consumers. This success was accomplished with lots of consumer and advocacy input to the final product.

This opportunity to pass employment discrimination legislation will be greatly enhanced by involving broad input from stakeholders. Please support the -1 amendment to HB 2938 that would add 2 additional statewide disability/older worker representatives.