



House Committee on Business & Labor
Testimony in Support of HB 2938
Workplace Age Discrimination Task Force
Carlos Romo, AARP Volunteer

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My name is Carlos D. Romo and I am retired and a Volunteer for AARP Oregon. I am pleased to testify in support of HB 2938. Our 503,000 AARP Oregon members are very diverse, not only in age, but also in race, gender, ethnicity, national origin and disability, all areas covered by equal employment opportunity laws.

I support creating a Workplace Age Discrimination Task Force so we can identify and evaluate the impacts of age discrimination and develop solutions. Studies show that the most common reasons older adults keep working, or seek employment after retiring, are because they need the income to make ends meet or they want to remain an engaged and active member of their community. Demographic studies show that our population is aging and employers must adapt to hiring and keeping older adults in this fast moving shift. Older workers will constitute around 25% of our workforce in the near future. Older workers in Oregon are diverse in age, skills, talents and experience and, because of these factors, they can contribute invaluablely to making our workplace better for everyone.

We also know racial and gender inequality plays an overlapping role with age discrimination. White households in the United States take in significantly more income than Black and Latino households. Even when Whites and people of color work in the same field—management, for instance—these income gaps do not disappear. Women and BIPOC communities continue to bring home less than White men because of the pervasiveness of income inequality. When we add in workplace age discrimination, vast amounts of research indicates that women and BIPOC workers are literally being shortchanged in their paychecks.

We know we have a problem, now we need to move forward to fix it. I urge you to pass HB 2938. Thank you so much for your consideration.