



March 15, 2021

Chair Holvey, Co-Vice Chairs Bonham and Grayber, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of OR, we wish to express our support for House Bill 2938. We are comfortable with the language of the bill and the array of task force members designated in the bill.

A number of discussions took place regarding Task Force appointments when the bill was initially considered, and this bill is the result. Importantly, it evenly balances the interests of several groups. There are many individuals or groups that might wish to serve on the Task Force, and to be frank, AAUW of OR would be one of them, but we also wanted to make sure that the Task Force was small enough so it could efficiently and effectively undertake the study it is tasked to accomplish. Of course, the specifics of the Task Force membership will be in the hands of the Governor, but we are happy to participate in our role as one of the many supporting groups that will bring information and testimony to the Task Force.

We just want to see the Task Force get to work!

The reasons for establishing a task force are many. Perhaps the most important reason is that it is an unfortunate fact today that workplace discrimination based on age is so routinely practiced that it has become acceptable, and a part of everyday reality. And that's not right.

It's as if once one reaches age 50, and certainly by ages 55 or 60, there's an expectation that older individuals should give way to younger employees. That even though older workers have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate value at their job by hard work, competence and experience, that it's time to move on and allow someone else to fill the slot.

The same attitudes that sought to stifle gender equity are being repeated regarding ageism today. Not too long ago, it was perfectly acceptable to say that women shouldn't be in the workforce because they would take jobs away from men. But it's not a either- or, zero sum game. Older workers aren't trying to snatch jobs from younger workers — if a worker is qualified, she or he should be able to work the job.

As I hope we have demonstrated, there are a number of reasons to highlight the issue of age discrimination in the workplace.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Trish Garner, J.D., M.S.W.*  
*State Public Policy Chair,*  
*American Association of University Women of Oregon*  
*garner37@mac.com*