

Thank you for your service legislators. I am writing in support of HB 2938 which would establish a task force on age discrimination. I do this, because, after seeing the abrupt and deeply troubling ouster of Ruby Haughton-Pitts, an exceptionally effective leader and Oregon AARP's first African American female director, I am convinced that all organizations, even those that purport to advocate for older Americans, are vulnerable to a culture of ageism, racism and gender bias. Given this, the legislation should be amended to direct a focus on the intersection of age, race and gender as it relates to discriminatory practices.

Knowing that women make less than men for equal work and that Black, Latinx, Indigenous and other employees who are not White make less than Whites, often with equal or less education or experience, we also know the impact of age discrimination will disproportionately impact the people, like Ms. Haughton-Pitts, who occupy all three historically marginalized identities.

We need to better understand not only the tactics of employers that discriminate, but also the tactics they use to obfuscate their practices and avoid any kind of intervention or accountability. Further, with a deeper understanding of patterns of discriminatory practice, we need to develop strategies to increase accountability and disincentivize these patterns.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. Thank you Ms. Haughton-Pitts for helping shape this bill and for not being silent about your treatment. I hope that a successful passage of HB 2938 and the eventual Task Force on Age Discrimination can listen to the experiences of older women of color in our workforce and prevent what is currently happening to Ms. Haughton-Pitts from happening to any other Oregonians.

Respectfully submitted,  
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