



Oregon Women's Rights Coalition

HB 2800-Workplace Age Discrimination-Support

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Sosa and members of the Committee

The Oregon Women's Rights Coalition supports HB 2800. We believe that age discrimination in the workplace laws need to be updated. This legislation will restore older workers; rights to be treated fairly based on their skills and experience, not their age, that was created by a federal/state conflict created by the US Supreme Court.

The problem is real. It begins with applications and interviews as highlighted in a 2020 report of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.

The largest and most recent field study of age discrimination in hiring was conducted in 2015 and involved over 40,000 applications for over 13,000 jobs in 12 cities across 11 states.[\[170\]](#) It found evidence of age discrimination against both men and women, with older applicants - those age 64 to 66 years old -- more frequently denied job interviews than middle-age applicants age 49 to 51.[\[171\]](#) Women, especially older women but also those at middle age, were subjected to more age discrimination than older men.[\[172\]](#)

This age discrimination has serious consequences for not only the individual, their families but also for their communities and states. For example, in Oregon there are more than 65,000 dual eligibles who are on not only Medicare but Medicaid (the Oregon Health Plan). Their incomes are so low that their Medicare fees are paid by the government. These are individuals over age 65. Again, from the US EEOC report.

The financial and emotional harm of age discrimination on older workers and their families is significant. Once an older worker loses a job, she will likely endure the longest period of unemployment compared to other age groups and will likely take a significant pay cut if she becomes re-employed.[\[188\]](#) The loss of a job has serious long-term financial consequences as older workers often must draw down their retirement savings while unemployed, and are likely to suffer substantial losses in income if they become re-employed.[\[189\]](#).

But hiring older, experienced workers can have a positive effect on the workplace. Again, the US EEOC report points out several positive outcomes for workers and employers.

With low unemployment and growing shortages of skilled, qualified workers, hiring older workers can help employers fill what has become known as the "skills gap" -- the lack of trained or experienced workers for higher-skilled jobs. Their employment also furthers economic and social policies that encourage continued work to strengthen personal financial well-being and our economy.[\[225\]](#).

OWRC urges you to support HB2800 to clarify age discrimination laws in Oregon. It's good for workers, employers and the communities in which they live and work.

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<https://www.eeoc.gov/reports/state-age-discrimination-and-older-workers-us-50-years-after-age-discrimination-employment>

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