



February 5, 2023

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer, Sosa, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Gerontological Association (OGA) recommends a “Do Pass” for HB2800. OGA is Oregon’s network for professionals who work with older adults. We envision our region as a vibrant and vital place to age - a region that celebrates older adults as assets.

Oregon is experiencing dramatic social change and older adults are at the *intersection*. Demography is destiny. The 50-plus age cohort will grow from 36% to 43% of the population by 2050. According to AARP, more than half of Oregon voters in 2020 were aged 50 years or older. Oregon has a golden opportunity to leverage the power and resources of older adults to forge public policies to build vibrant, healthy, equitable, and resilient communities for all ages and abilities.

And at the heart of this is the ability to stay in the workforce as desired. Age discrimination is wrong - like any other kind of discrimination. All workers should be considered for a job based on their qualifications, not negative stereotypes, and outdated assumptions.

This is a serious problem in our state, and we know from US Labor Statistics that it takes older workers longer to find that next job. HB 2800 ensures older workers are given a fair chance in the beginning of the hiring process by prohibiting employers from requiring applicants from disclosing their age or graduation date prior to completing the first interview.

Age discrimination threatens the financial security of older workers by pushing them out of the workforce and denying them jobs and promotions. We need to remove employment barriers and address negative stereotypes, allowing older workers to be a part of solving our workforce shortages.

Older individuals need to have the same tools to address age discrimination as people in other protected classes. It’s unfair that every other group has recourse against discrimination. It’s time to even the playing field for all Oregonians. We urge the committee to report out a “Do Pass” recommendation for HB2800.

Sincerely,

Anabel Pelham, OGA President