

Submitter: Michael Schultz

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB2800

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the House and Business & Labor Committee:

As the Oregon AARP Volunteer State President, I am writing to you to urge your support of HB 2800. This bill is extremely important to our over 500,000 AARP members across the state.

Oregon's current workplace age discrimination law needs to be fixed! All workers should be treated fairly based on their qualifications not their age. Passage of HB 2800 will create this very needed fix to Oregon's current age discrimination law.

Experienced workers bring expertise, maturity and perspective. However, negative stereotypes and outdated assumptions mean that older workers and job seekers are often treated unfairly. We need to remove employment barriers and address negative stereotypes, 62% of Oregonians ages 40+ have seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace. Oregon Hispanic/Latino older workers reported at 63%. Women workers (64%) and Black workers (77%) report even higher percentage of having seen or experienced age discrimination. Nationwide over 93% of workers age 50+ believe that age discrimination against older workers is common in the workplace today. In Oregon more than 82% of older workers support making Oregon's age discrimination law stronger.

A past US Supreme Court ruling made it harder to prove age discrimination than any other type of discrimination including race, sex and religion. Courts across the country, including here in Oregon have relied on this narrow interpretation, often leaving Oregon seniors the victims of age discrimination without any remedy for the harms and losses suffered.

HB 2800 resolves this federal and state conflict by restoring older workers' rights to be treated fairly based on their skills and experience, not their age and upholds Oregon's commitment to equitable justice while balancing the rights of both the employee and employer. I strongly advocate for the passage of HB 2800. Its the right thing to do as discrimination in any form should not exist in employment hiring practices.

Thank you for your review and consideration of my submitted testimony regarding HB 2800.

Sincerely,

J. Michael Schultz, Oregon AARP State Volunteer President
Portland, Oregon, 97212