



February 4, 2023

Paul Holvey, Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem OR 97301

Chair Holvey and members of the House Committee on Business and Labor:

O4AD, the Oregon Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Disabilities, shares our strong support of HB 2800. O4AD advocates for the independence, dignity, choice and safety for Oregon's older adults and people with disabilities. HB 2800 addresses a key piece of independence and dignity – decreasing discrimination towards older adults in the workplace.

Equity is a key focus right now for our state – it is in almost every conversation happening in the Capitol and work is actively being done to help our state lower barriers for those who have been disenfranchised. Discrimination based on age is harming the work we are all engaged in to achieve a more equitable state. While aging can be a difficult and uncomfortable conversation for us all to have and be a part of, nevertheless, it is hopefully a part of life we will all participate in at some point. The discomfort our society may feel cannot usurp what we must do to ensure older adults have equal access to their choices in life including employment.

Older adults deserve to have the same opportunities to build their independence via employment and a fair playing ground to find that employment. All too often, our society decides it is 'ok' to disregard the qualifications, experience or education of an individual simply because they are older than we may be comfortable with in a work setting. However, what we miss out with that decision is that same experience, education, and qualification benefitting industry and business. Our state and our nation is in the middle of a workforce crisis in almost every sector. Employers constantly lament the 'brain drain' that has occurred and inability to find qualified candidates for open positions. Creating a workplace environment that encourages applicants of all ages is yet another way we address this shortage.

O4AD supports HB 2800 and we ask you support this important legislation that increases the independence, dignity and choice for our older adults in Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nicole Palmateer Hazelbaker
On behalf of O4AD – the Oregon Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Disabilities