

February 6, 2023

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

As the Chair of the Employment and the Economy Committee of Age-Friendly Portland and Multnomah County, the former director of the Institute on Aging at Portland State University, and as an older adult myself, I am writing in support for HB 2800.

It is crucial to address age discrimination in the workplace for individuals, organizations, and our state and to finally include older adults as a protected class in our employment law.

Our review of research¹ has shown that:

- Older workers can enhance organizational productivity and business outcomes.
- Older workers have significant accumulated knowledge and skills and help to retain institutional memory.
- Having an age-diverse workforce can result in positive outcomes for employers and employees alike.
- Attracting or retaining older adults who might otherwise leave a community can be an important economic development strategy.
- Older adults start more new businesses than younger adults, helping to grow the local economy.
- Continued work later in life brings economic benefits to the community and financial, health, and other benefits to older adults themselves.

Please, help to end ageism in our state and vote to report out with a “do pass” recommendation on HB 2800. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Margaret B. Neal, Ph.D.
Newberg, Oregon

¹ <https://www.giaging.org/resources/the-case-for-age-friendly-communities>