



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Holvey
Vice-Chairs Elmer & Sosa
Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor

FR: Catie Theisen, OR AFL-CIO

RE: HB 2008 Support

February 3, 2021

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across Oregon and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process, including workers of all ages.

We know that women, people of color, LGBTQ Oregonians, older Oregonians, those with disabilities and others are more likely to face discrimination at the workplace, which is why all of these groups are already included as protected classes under Oregon law. We also know that many of these identities intersect to put the most marginalized communities even more at risk: 63% of Latinx workers, 64% of women workers, and 77% of Black workers who are 40+ have reported seeing or experiencing age discrimination in the workplace.

We are also keenly aware of recruitment and retention issues across industries in this state. When workers who are over 50 have difficulties finding and keeping employment due to age discrimination, this has significant consequences on our economy and communities at large.

HB 2800 is a narrowly tailored bill to help address this issue. The bill includes age proxies such as retirement or health care costs as potentially discriminatory employment decisions, prohibits initial disclosure of age or graduation dates in employment applications, prohibits proxy language in job advertisements, while also protecting seniority systems and voluntary early retirement plans.

More than 2,500 Oregonians filed age discrimination claims with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) in the last decade — about one per workday. There should be no place for ageism in our state. Fair and just workplaces with engaged, multigenerational workforces ultimately foster a strong economy, vibrant communities, and workers of all ages who are self-sufficient.. We encourage your support of HB 2008.