



Oregon Commission on Black Affairs

Advocating for Equity and Diversity throughout Oregon

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer and Sosa, and Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor,

For the Record, my name is Liz Foucher-Branch, I serve on the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA) and I am writing in support of House Bill 2800. OCBA serves the people of Oregon to empower and support the African American and Black community through our unique roles as policy advisors to Oregon state policymakers and leaders. OCBA is a catalyst that allows partnerships between the state government and our community in rural and urban areas to ensure success for all African American and Black Oregonians by addressing longstanding and emerging issues at the policy level.

A 2017 AARP study determined three out of five older workers have seen or experienced age discrimination. I don't know anyone over 40 who hasn't run into this during the application or interview process. According to a recent Forbes article, gendered age bias is particularly pernicious. We all know how much work it is to cover graying hair!

African Americans are more likely to have seen or experienced age discrimination than their Hispanic/Latinx or white peers (77% vs. 61% and 59%, respectively). Twenty-nine percent of individuals report being asked their birthdate when they graduated and other discriminatory questions during interviews. HB 2800 will designate age-related questions during interviews or offers of employment as a discriminatory practice.

The aforementioned Forbes article reported that gender-based bias affects women under 35 and over 50 years of age on average. These disparities appear regardless of education or background and impact more women than men. Age-related claims often go unreported. Yet, Nine out of ten workers feel that age discrimination is common.

The AARP report I am citing is from 2017, and the Forbes article from 2021 shows that age-related discrimination has gone unregulated for too long! It is beyond time for a bill like HB 2800! We need it to regulate and eliminate years of age-related discrimination. I urge the members of the committee to vote yes on House Bill 2800.

Liz Foucher-Branch

Oregon Commission on Black Affairs

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<https://www.oregonadvocacy.org/>

503.302.9725

oaco.mail@oregon.gov

PO Box 17550, Portland, OR 97217