

Feb. 18, 2025

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Elmer & Munoz and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today in support of HB 3187. Let's give older workers a fair shot at employment.

Oregon is one of the oldest states in the nation and we are experiencing a permanent demographic shift. At the same time, there are critical worker shortages in many sectors. And yet, older workers still face age discrimination in employment.

It's time to stop age discrimination and allow older adults the chance to compete for a job on an equal playing field without being screened out before an interview due to graduation or employment dates. This is a "win win" opportunity for workers, the state and ultimately employers too who will discover many outstanding employees who are older adults.

I can't tell you how many colleagues in their 50s – or even 40s – have relayed tales of job opportunities evaporating as soon as a hiring manager determines their age. The biases and assumptions are all too common: older workers are not tech-savvy, slow, expensive, out of touch, a "poor fit" with company culture, etc. And yet, in addition to their job skills developed over many years, older workers can serve as role models and mentors to younger staff.

As Oregonians enjoy longer and healthier lives, they also need the opportunity to be financially independent by not being shut out of opportunities for employment.

Let's make Oregon age friendly – and fair. Vote to support HB 3187.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Laxton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Christopher Laxton
Milwaukie, OR