



Feb. 18, 2025

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

**The Oregon Gerontological Association urges support of HB 3187.**

**Who we are**

OGA enhances knowledge and cultivates a network of all those involved in the field of aging to improve the lives of older adults and those who support them in Oregon and SW Washington. Our network enables service providers, policy makers, businesses, educators, researchers, students and others to share expertise and best practices to address challenging issues.

**The problem**

Age discrimination is a persistent form of discrimination that has a ripple effect on families and the economy. Older adults in their 50s and early 60s may be out of work due to caregiving responsibilities or layoffs. And when that happens, they find it very challenging to return to the workforce. According to AARP Oregon, 55% of Oregon workers 40+ have seen and experienced workplace age discrimination. More than 50% of those who had applied for a job were asked about their age, date of birth or graduation date, which is a barrier to getting a foot in the door for an interview. Older Oregonians are finding themselves unfairly treated during the hiring and firing process.

**Benefits of working a few years longer**

Oregonians may need to work longer due to a contracting retirement income system, longer lifespans, and rising health care costs. Even lengthening the average retirement age from 63 to 66 improves retirement security by: 1) boosting monthly Social Security benefits; 2) allowing workers to build up a larger 401(k) or OregonSaves balance; and 3) reducing the period over which households must rely on their retirement assets. 4) Fewer older adults will reach retirement with only Social Security as the only income. *Currently about 30% of Oregon seniors rely on Social Security for most of their income. For many of these seniors, Social Security is their only source of income, which may make some of these individuals reliant on Medicaid and state services.*

It's vital to the Oregon economy and the welfare of our citizens that regulations prohibit age and date of birth on job applications as well as exclude discriminatory language such as “digital native” or “recent college grad” as a proxy for dates.

With Oregon’s workforce shortage it is only common sense to value older workers for their knowledge, skills and abilities and not block them for getting job interviews.

Older Oregonians are valued members of our society. They have helped to create this great place we call home. They deserve a fair shot at employment to enable them to save for a financially secure retirement. Oregon’s workplace age discrimination law is failing to protect workers. It’s time to fix that.

Sincerely,

Joyce De Monnin, MPH, MBA  
Chair, Oregon Gerontological Association  
Policy Committee