

I am a member of Oregon AAUW and am urging you to support the passage of HB 3187, the Workplace Age Discrimination Bill. Employees over 50 bring years of valuable experience to the workplace.

Having been a high school English teacher, I then opted to stay home and raise my young family. While doing so, I slowly but steadily worked on a Masters degree with the goal of eventually returning to the workforce once the children were more independent.

Fortunately, at age 50 I was hired in the School Psychology/Development Department of a large rural ESD and for the next 15 years was able to share my well-developed professional and life-skills with both clients and younger staff members. I mentored several MSW students, and taught community parenting classes, along with suicide prevention workshops. Along with others (and a few over 50) I was part of a crisis 'Flight Team' which responded to trauma in several of our outlying small towns. Having mature members present in times of crisis was considered to be an advantage when facing tragic circumstances.

I often wondered, had I not lived in a remote part of the state but in a metro area, would I have been given the same opportunities? I thought it to be unlikely.

Individuals over 50 deserve full and equal access to employment opportunities. Today, workplace age discrimination has become so common that it is an unfortunate routine practice.

This form of discrimination especially affects women who have worked within the home giving care to children or elders, especially after the Covid pandemic, where many lost their jobs or were forced to make the difficult choice, prioritizing their families. Their employment history reflects these periods and puts them at a disadvantage for current work and adds to their retirement security risk.

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