

February 10, 2025

To: Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the Committee

Re: Support for House Bill 3187, the workplace age discrimination bill

My name is Charlene Vojtilla and I am a member of American Association of University Women of Oregon. I write this letter in strong support of House Bill 3187.

Oregon law must make sure that discrimination in the workplace based on age is unacceptable and illegal. Under the law as defined by courts, all employers have to do is point to another reason for an action unfavorable to its employees – even if age was a factor in their decision. This loophole is not fair. If it's age discrimination, employees should be given an opportunity to hold employers accountable.

Age and experience are assets to employers, not liabilities. It is important to respect and value experience, not dismiss it. I continued to do important work in the health technology field until I was over 70 and I was fortunate that my employers valued what I brought to the job. I believe everyone should be given this opportunity and if legal recourse is necessary to ensure it, then this guardrail should be put in place.

There may be situations where an employer needs to know an applicant's age, but not before a conditional offer is made. Right now, computer programs receiving job applications can just automatically reject an applicant based on age – before anyone even glances at the application. This isn't fair.

Older Oregonians have to provide financial support to themselves and their families just as much as younger Oregonians. If they can do the job, they should be given an opportunity to do it.

I urge you to support House Bill 3187.

Sincerely,

Charlene Vojtilla

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