

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 am coming up on 50 years of age myself and just graduated from Portland Community College with my degree in gerontology. Many of my friends in their fifties and sixties are going back to school, changing careers, and going where they are needed in their communities, and many are working to support their children and grandchildren. We all bring a wealth of experience, education and knowledge with us, and we want to work! Age should *absolutely not* be a disqualifier for employment, no matter what a person's age is.

As Oregonians enjoy a 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,*

Katherine Backus

Portland, OR

