

February 19, 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 Catherine Lutes and I serve as the President of the American Association of University Women of Oregon. I write this letter on behalf of AAUW of OR in strong support of House Bill 3187.

It is unfortunate that discrimination based on age is so prevalent, particularly for older women ([National Bureau of Economic Research](#)), while at the same time evoking such mediocre pushback in both the workplace and enforcement of Oregon law.

Oregon law must ensure that discrimination in the workplace based on age is unacceptable and illegal. While there is a law in place on this topic, courts have construed it so narrowly that 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 is an asset to employers, not a liability. It is important to respect and value experience, not dismiss it.

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.

We urge you to support House Bill 3187.

Sincerely,

Catherine Lutes

President, American Association of University Women of Oregon

Ashland, Oregon