

Date: February 19, 2025

To: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards

From: Twila Jacobsen

RE: Support for HB 3187

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Muñoz, Members of the Committee:

My name is Twila Jacobsen, and I live in Eugene, Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3187, a crucial bill aimed at strengthening protections against age discrimination in the workplace.

For many women, like me, my experiences were not linear. I was able to return to school for a Master's Degree as an "older than average" student. This is also my experience with becoming a mother. Therefore, after co-directing a non-profit and also a small business, I sought outside employment. After a number of rejections related to managerial positions, I did find employment with a local government, where again I was passed over for advancement. Experience and dedication to make work life and family life viable can only come with open and fair employment practices. Age is a plus, not a minus, when seeking the best candidate to advance, educate and mentor the younger employees of any organization.

Although laws exist to prevent age discrimination, real-world experience shows they are often ineffective. Employers have found ways to bypass these protections, using loopholes and subtle tactics to sidestep accountability.

Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court has narrowly interpreted age discrimination laws, making it even more difficult for older workers to prove their cases. As a result, many face unfair treatment with little to no recourse, leading to serious financial and personal consequences. This burden falls especially hard on women, low-income workers, and workers of color.

HB 3187 takes important steps to close these gaps. By broadening the definition of "age" to include common age-related proxies, prohibiting certain age-specific questions on job applications, and implementing additional safeguards, this bill will give experienced workers a fairer chance to demonstrate their skills and compete for jobs.

For the thousands of Oregonians who deserve a level playing field, I urge you to support and vote "yes" on HB 3187. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Twila Jacobsen, President
SEIU 503 Retiree Local 001