



## Oregon School Employees Association

[www.osea.org](http://www.osea.org)

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Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Munoz and Elmer and members of the committee,

For the record my name is Willis Homann and I am a Government Relations Specialist for the Oregon School Employees Association. On behalf of over 25,000 classified educators in every level of Oregon's public education system, including many retired members who remain passionate stewards of public education – we support HB 3187 to ensure fair and just workplaces for all Oregonians, regardless of age.

The reality is that people are living and working longer than they have before, but Oregon's law has not kept up with this new reality. Age discrimination threatens the financial security of older workers by pushing them out of the workplace, denying them jobs and promotions, or making it harder to find a job to begin with. At a time when Oregon is facing critical workforce shortages, especially in education, we cannot let outdated laws push away some of our most experienced workers.

Classified educators come to their jobs at a variety of points in their life. Some are just starting their educator journey, and some might be starting their second career -but each come into their roles because they are passionate about our students. Classified jobs are difficult to recruit and retain for - the pay and benefits often don't match the amount of work and the on-the-job stress classified experience. At a time when we are struggling to find people to fill these necessary jobs – we should be removing barriers that prevent people from pursuing this work. By removing barriers for older Oregonians to enter the workforce, we make it easier to recruit and retain passionate, experienced and qualified educators in our schools.

Age discrimination threatens the financial security of older Oregonians, it keeps them from filling roles we need to fill, and it does not live up to our values as a state. This bill would help Oregon live up to its values of an equitable, just workplace. That is why there are already protections on the basis of race, sex and creed. Adding age to that list would help us move a step closer to a diverse, passionate, experienced and multigenerational workforce in Oregon.

HB 3187 would ensure that all Oregonians are hired based on their skills and experience, not their age. It would strengthen Oregon's workforce – bolstering Oregon's economy, it would promote fairness and ensure every worker is treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, we urge an aye vote on HB 3187.

Sincerely,

Willis Homann

Government Relations Specialist

