

February 18, 2025

FROM: Anne Buckley, Portland, OR

TO: House Labor and Workplace Standards Committee

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

My name is Anne Buckley and I live in Portland, Oregon. I'm here today in support of HB 3187 and to share my experience of workplace age discrimination.

My professional career was centered on leadership and the delivery of Technical Services for various organizations including higher education, Fortune 500 companies, and other companies with a global footprint.

In my early 50s, I relocated to Portland and began my job search within the local tech sector where the employee base tends to skew younger. That's when I realized that despite my deep professional experience leading global teams, my age worked against me.

A common way to peg a job applicant's age is to ask for their college graduation dates. For many 50+ applicants, this question implicitly discloses their age and can be a barrier to moving forward in the hiring process. However, this question worked to my *advantage* because I was a non-traditional college student, graduating in my late-30s, effectively lopping 15 years off my perceived age. As a result, I was able to get job interviews with more ease than many of my peers of similar age.

However, I still encountered age discrimination. I was interviewing for a position that was a perfect match to my skills and experience. After several rounds of interviews, I was invited to come in and meet the team that I was going to lead. This meeting was positioned as a courtesy meeting so the team could meet me in-person before I came onboard.

Usually, teams are interested in finding out how their new boss will impact them, so they'll ask about success metrics, management style, and (their) career development. Not this team! They wanted to know what music I listened to, what TV shows I watched, and where I went on weekends. It was awkward and obvious to me that while my experience was a clear fit for the job, my older age was not. Afterwards, I was rejected for the position due to "team fit". It was pretty clear to me that I did not get the job because of my age.

After that experience, before I applied to a company, I reviewed their online presence to see whether a diverse range of age groups was represented. If there were, I applied; if there weren't, then I passed. I quickly found employment with this approach. **But** it reduced the pool of potential employers which was a big disadvantage for me. More importantly, I shouldn't have to take affirmative action to *avoid* employers who engage in unlawful age discrimination.

I wish my story were unique but the majority of people I know who are 50+ have struggled to find meaningful employment as an older worker. HB 3187 provides important updates to Oregon law to address age discrimination, and I urge your support. Thank you for the opportunity to share my story with you.

Sincerely,  
Anne Buckley