

February 19, 2025

To the House Committee on Labor & Workforce Standards:

Chair Grayber & Members of the Committee, my name is Stacey Triplett, I am the Community Engagement Director at AARP Oregon. I am reading the testimony from a retired Human Resources consultant in support of HB 3187. Since confidentiality is the cornerstone of any client-consultant relationship they were concerned with attaching their name to this testimony and asked me to read it:

I worked as an HR consultant for more than twenty years in Oregon. This work included advising employers in all facets of human resources, including hiring, promotion and termination. I worked with many Oregon companies, from small family owned businesses to Oregon's largest companies, public, private and non-profit.

While employers in Oregon were usually very cognizant of discrimination issues, that did not carry over to age and far too often I saw blatant forms of age discrimination in the hiring and termination process.

In my work to help employers recruit and hire talent, employers would equate an applicant's age to ability when making hiring decisions. No matter how much coaching and training I did, I would still hear "hey just between you and me..." and then the hiring person would make an age biased comment. For example, I would hear concern that older applicants could not learn a new system *even if the system was unique and all applicants, regardless of age, would have to be trained*. When reviewing interview notes, I would see comments that tied age to ability: "they would be slow to learn," "not a digital native" and "less vital."

I also worked with employers to manage layoffs and reductions in force. Part of that work included what is called an "Adverse Impact Analysis." This analysis compares selection rates between two different groups to ensure employment actions, such as reduction in force and layoff decisions, do not disproportionately affect certain protected classes.

I was specifically asked to do these analyses to ensure an employer was not discriminating on the basis of sex and race. When I pushed back and suggested they include age, I was told on more than one occasion:

- *we're not going to consider that,*
- *we don't worry about age because the law is easy when it comes to age discrimination;*
- *we can defend against those cases.*

The sad reality is that whether it's in the hiring or firing stages, businesses are run by people and age bias is all too frequent and, worse, an accepted form of discrimination. Because of my unique vantage point, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to update Oregon's law to provide *real* protections against workplace age discrimination. I urge you to pass HB 3187. Thank you.