



February 19, 2025

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ira Cuello-Martinez and I am the Policy Advocacy Director at PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. PCUN aims to empower farmworkers and working Latinx families to improve their working conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy.

I am submitting testimony in support of HB 3187. Our members have expressed frustration when they have experienced age discrimination in the workplace. I want to elevate a couple of stories that our members have shared with us. The first is of an elderly farmworker who worked at a seed company for over 30 years. He says:

"I was the oldest worker in my position and had the most experience at the company. The general manager often asked me things like, 'Are you going to retire soon?' and said I was 'costing the company a lot of money' because of the benefits I earned. He also treated me more coldly than he treated others and was often rude to me. Two years before I was fired, the other workers all got a raise but I did not. The general manager told me I would not be getting a raise because I didn't work the way I did when I was younger."

That worker was fired soon after he faced age discrimination without explanation and it affected him both emotionally and economically. Another worker shared how several older workers were fired due to their age. They said:

"I was one of the workers who was fired. Most of the workers who were fired were more experienced, older workers who had been at the company a long time. My coworkers and I were told we did not qualify for any of the jobs anymore even though we had been doing the work with no problem. They couldn't or wouldn't tell us what qualifications or requirements we didn't meet though. I think the real reason that I and many other workers were fired because we were older. This is not right."

This is only a glimpse of what many older low-wage Latinx workers face in Oregon. We need to fix Oregon's workplace age discrimination law so all workers are treated fairly based on their qualifications not their age. I urge you to support HB 3187 to help ensure all workers are treated fairly regardless of their age.

Ira Cuello-Martinez  
Policy and Advocacy Director  
PCUN