



Martha E. Sonato  
Legislative Advocate  
Oregon Law Center  
971-901-5031  
msonato@oregonlawcenter.org

**To:** House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards  
**From:** Martha E. Sonato, Oregon Law Center  
**Re:** Support for HB 3187 – Age Discrimination protections  
**Date:** 02/19/2025

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Muñoz and Elmer, members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3187 on behalf of the Oregon Law Center.

Our clients are low-income Oregonians who work hard every day to make ends meet. They keep Oregon running by working in key industries such as construction and agricultural work. Strengthening protections against age discrimination benefits both workers and the broader economy. When workers are treated fairly, employers can retain experienced workers, reduce turnover costs, and maintain a stable workforce. Ensuring that workers are judged on their abilities rather than age-related factors helps families stay financially secure and supports local economies.

HB 3187 is a straightforward proposal to strengthen protections against age-based employment discrimination. It clarifies that the term “*because of age*” in employment law includes factors such as salary, length of service, and retirement or pension status when used as proxies for age. Without this clarification, such practices could sidestep existing age discrimination protections.

It is important to note that this bill does not automatically assume discrimination has occurred. Instead, it gives workers the opportunity to challenge employment decisions they believe were based on age. Employees would still need to prove that age was a factor, as outlined in the bill’s legal language, which states that “because of age” may include but is not limited to the listed factors.

For many low-income workers, especially those in physically demanding jobs, keeping steady employment as they age is critical for their financial well-being. This bill helps ensure that workers are evaluated based on their skills and contributions rather than factors that may indirectly relate to age.

By passing HB 3187, the legislature can reinforce fair employment practices and promote stability for Oregon’s workforce. We respectfully urge your support for this bill.  
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Martha E. Sonato  
Oregon Law Center

***The Oregon Law Center’s mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.***