

HB3497 Testimony
2025

Thank you, Chair Hartman, Vice-Chair Scharf, and Members of the Committee.

For the record my name is Brandy Penner (she/her), I am the Program Manager for Friendly House Elder Pride Services.

I am here today to emphasize the critical need for Oregon to become a welcoming, accessible, safe state for older adults. Achieving this transformative vision requires decisive action to implement systemic changes that will enhance our state's capacity to support its growing population of older adults

It is an undeniable reality that ageism permeates our society. Ageism, like all forms of prejudice, strips individuals of their dignity and credibility. Older adults are often ignored, their needs go unrecognized and unmet, and the potential for their contributions remains untapped. We live in a culture that anoints youth as the ideal, while neglecting the rich experiences and wisdom that come with age.

In the absence of legislative action, older adults and service providers are left to navigate a fragmented system of resources that is frequently overburdened and underfunded. By establishing a Shared Future Oregon Task Force, you would be taking an important step toward addressing the multifaceted needs of Oregon's older adults. This initiative would promote a more inclusive and supportive environment for individuals of all ages and ensure that older adults can thrive in their communities. Such action would directly combat age bias and discrimination by elevating awareness of the needs and invaluable contributions of older adults.

I implore you to act decisively and swiftly to create pathways that guarantee older adults in Oregon receive the support they deserve from a system designed explicitly with their needs in mind. With these essential changes, we **can** cultivate an Oregon where older adults are not just acknowledged and supported but celebrated and empowered to thrive.

Thank you for your consideration, and your commitment to older adults across Oregon!