

To: Senate Committee on Labor and Business

From: Twila Jacobsen, President  
SEIU 503 Retiree Local 001

RE: Support for HB 3187 A

Date: April 29, 2025

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Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, Members of the Committee:

My name is Twila Jacobsen, and I live in Eugene, Oregon. I serve as the elected President of SEIU 503 Retiree Local 001. I am writing to voice my strong support for HB 3187 A, an essential bill designed to strengthen protections against age discrimination in the workplace.

Like many women, my career path has not followed a straight line. I returned to school for a master's degree as an "older than average" student. I also became a mother later in life. After co-directing a nonprofit and running a small business, I sought employment elsewhere. Despite my experience, I faced repeated rejections for management roles and, even after securing a position in local government, was overlooked for advancement. Fair and open employment practices are vital to ensuring that experience and dedication-qualities often gained with age-are recognized and valued. Age should be seen as an asset, not a liability, especially when it comes to mentoring, educating, and advancing the next generation of workers.

Although laws exist to prohibit age discrimination, practical experience shows these protections are often inadequate. Employers have found ways to circumvent existing rules, using loopholes and subtle tactics to avoid accountability. Additionally, narrow interpretations by the U.S. Supreme Court have made it even more difficult for older workers to prove discrimination, leaving many with little recourse and facing significant financial and personal consequences. These burdens fall especially hard on women, low-income workers, and workers of color.

HB 3187 A addresses part of these shortcomings by prohibiting employers from asking about an applicant's age, date of birth, or graduation date until after the initial interview, unless such information is required for a bona fide occupational qualification or by law. This change will help ensure that experienced candidates have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their skills and compete for jobs, protected from age-based bias.

For the thousands of Oregonians who deserve a level playing field, I urge you to support and vote “yes” on HB 3187 A. Thank you for considering this important step toward fairness and equity in the workplace.