



Testimony on S.B. 56
AN ACT DETERRING AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT
APPLICATIONS
Committee on Aging
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My name is Michael Daley, and I am a Master of Social Work student at the University of Connecticut's School of Social Work and an intern at the North Central Area Agency on Aging Inc. (NCAAA), in Hartford, CT, on whose behalf this testimony is written. An important aspect of NCAAA's mission is to advocate for the rights of older adults, including combatting ageism and protecting their economic security. As such, NCAAA fully endorses Senate Bill #56, an act that prohibits employers from requesting or requiring job applicants to provide their age, date of birth, and school attendance and graduation dates when applying for a job, unless required to comply with any state or federal law or needed for a legitimate occupational qualification or need.

Age discrimination in employment applications is a very real and common occurrence with profound effects on our aging population and our society in general. It is also illegal. Yet, employers continue to ask questions about age on employment applications, including indirect questions such as school graduation dates. This can often lead to discrimination, putting employers at risk for breaking the law and creating an environment in which older Americans find it harder to compete in the labor market. This bill would protect not only job applicants but also employers, as it would mandate an accepted best practice of refraining from asking age-related questions on employment applications to avoid the risk of potential unlawful discrimination based on age.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an added sense of urgency to pass this bill, as unemployment has increased at an alarming rate in our state. According to the most recent data from the Connecticut Department of Labor, since the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Connecticut in March 2020, 37% of initial claims for unemployment



benefits have been from individuals 50 years of age or older¹. Coupled with the following factors, our older population is at great risk of not being able to recover financially from the current economic crisis, as well as an increased risk for both physical and mental health issues:

- Age discrimination in the workplace was experienced or observed by 61% of individuals, 45 years of age or older, who participated in a survey conducted by AARP in 2018².
- In the same AARP survey, of those respondents who had sought work in the previous two years, 44% were asked age-related questions on their application or during an interview².
- During and directly preceding economic recessions, older workers experience an increase in age-related employment discrimination and difficulty being reemployed³.
- Involuntary job loss later in life is associated with serious negative effects on physical and mental health³.
- Connecticut ranks 2nd in the nation for the prevalence of implicit age bias, which is associated with poorer state-level health outcomes among older adults⁴.

Given the information cited above, this bill simply makes sense. It protects both potential employees and employers, there is zero cost to implementation, and it is something that all stakeholders can feel good about. These are uneasy times; let us make things more fair for everyone doing their best to survive and thrive. Once again, NCAAA fully supports Senate Bill #56, and wishes to thank the Committee on Aging for considering this important piece of legislation.

¹ Connecticut Department of Labor. (2021). *Processed initial claims by age updated February 1, 2021* [Data set]. Retrieved February 5, 2021, from <https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/claimsdata.asp>

² Perron, R. (2018). *The value of experience: Age discrimination against older workers persists*. AARP Research. <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00177.002>

³ Dahl, G.B., Knepper, M.M. (2020). *Age discrimination across the business cycle* (Working Paper 27581). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w27581>

⁴ Giasson, H.L., Chopik, W.J. (2020, October). Geographic patterns of implicit age bias and associations with state-level health outcomes across the United States. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(6), 1173-1190. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2707>