



**Testimony of
Laila Mandour, Chair, AFT Connecticut Retiree Division**

**Aging Committee
February 9, 2021**

SB 56 – AN ACT DETERRING AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

Good Afternoon Senator Slap, Representative Phipps and members of the Aging Committee. My name is Laila Mandour and I am the Chair of AFT Connecticut Retiree Division. I am writing in support of this very important bill – ***SB 56 An Act Deterring Age Discrimination in Employment Applications.***

Although we may not want to admit it, many people including employers, harbor negative attitudes towards older workers. Age discrimination persists even though older workers are not necessarily less healthy, less educated, less skillful, or less productive than younger workers.

While it may not seem to be discriminatory or biased to ask a prospective employee his/her date of birth, dates of attendance at or date of graduation from educational institutions, those tools may be used to determine someone's age and thereby facilitate age discrimination.

Age isn't a reliable indicator of a potential employee's work productivity or ability to actually undertake the duties of a particular job. Discriminating on the basis of age deprives employers and businesses of the knowledge, experience, and expertise a seasoned worker may possess. Allowing such discrimination encourages employers to recruit and hire younger workers – thereby depriving older workers of a chance at employment. Moreover, age discrimination perpetuates hiring of younger people at lower salaries because they may not possess the background, knowledge, and expertise an older worker does.

Our population consists of many older workers who may not have a job and who need employment; they should be allowed to contribute to this society and be able to move into retirement with dignity.

I can tell you one story about a woman I know who worked at an organization for over 30 years. She was considered a very good worker and always worked above and beyond what was expected of her. She had been promoted several times and had applied for one last promotion several

years prior to her intention to retire. She was denied. She applied again and was denied. She applied for a third time and was denied for a third time. Meanwhile, the same thing was happening to a colleague of hers (they were both in their late seventies.) Her colleague sued on the basis of age discrimination and the case was settled for an undisclosed sum. My friend was not litigious, and did not have the inclination to sue, and she retired a few years thereafter – earlier than she had planned. She was a good worker, very knowledgeable and would have worked longer. It was clear that age discrimination was happening in her organization (evidenced by several age discrimination related law suits.) My friend got the message – she realized that because of her age she was not going to be promoted, regardless of her knowledge and expertise in her field. I know that she retired because of this disappointment. It was sad to see someone who had worked so hard and been so loyal to an employer be demoralized and expected to retire because of her age. It was evident that she, because of her age, was not valued.

Judging older workers on the basis of age rather than their abilities is wrong and should not be tolerated. Please pass this very important bill.

Thank you for your time.