



Testimony of Tia Murphy, AARP CT Volunteer State President, in support of:
S.B. 56: AN ACT DETERRING AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS
Aging Committee, February 9, 2021

In 2013, I was in the least sweet spot imaginable, an almost 60-year old widowed and unemployed female. This was following a 35-year business career which I had stepped out a few years earlier to become a caregiver to my Dad – a widowed disabled world war 2 death camp liberator (Dachau) - who had just passed. While I was old enough to tap my retirement savings without a tax penalty, I was incurring "rest of life penalty" by doing so - losing the growth opportunity of those monies to fund my future retirement. But tap those funds I did, as minimally as possible to cover living expense costs and no more, amplifying my determination to find a job.

So, I buffed up my resume and set about finding a job. First, I tried applying for jobs for which I was qualified. It quickly became obvious that my years of experience were acting against me, rather than being assets. I scaled back my resume, eliminating only the most necessary dates but still it took me a very long time to secure an interview. When I did secure an in person interview, it became clear that I was meeting an interview quota more than being considered a serious job candidate, frequently encountering the dreaded, "well, why with your experience would you possibly want a job like this?" or my other 2 favorites – "you will be so much older than your boss and those you would be working with how will you fit in?" – and "this job requires a lot of computer work, do you know how to access the internet?"

How I longed to say "Honey, I was marketing the internet, broadband services, video on demand, wireless phones and other technologies to people your age". But what would be the point?

I finally took 2 retail positions creating a bifurcated day schedule – working from 5 am to 11 am at a major department store restocking and repricing children's clothes, then from 4 pm to 9 pm working at a big box store selling TV's and audio equipment.

I have an MBA from Loyola University, Chicago, have worked as an executive for 35 years managing multi-million-dollar budgets, meeting stringent performance goals and overseeing hundreds of staff, earning a very comfortable 6 figure salary.

Now I was working for \$10 an hour with no benefits, and a very challenging work schedule which I did for a bit. I did finally secure an office manager's position in a CPA's office for a year and a half when I again found myself in the same situation due to the continued reverberations from the Great Recession on that business.

Finally, aged 62, I was able to secure widows benefits, and cobbled together an income stream that allowed me to step out of the working world and into "retirement", where I became an ardent AARP advocacy and community volunteer dedicated to helping those over the age of 50 live their best lives possible informed by my own struggles and experienced to do so myself.

My story is not unusual. With a rapidly aging workforce, Connecticut residents will be well served by legislation that helps level the playing field for older workers. I look forward to seeing the passage of Senate Bill 56 and I thank the Committee for taking up this important issue.

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