



NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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**Testimony on SB 56
An Act Deterring Age Discrimination In Employment Applications
Committee on Aging
February 9, 2021
Submitted By: Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW**

The National Association of Social Workers Connecticut Chapter, representing over 2300 members, supports Senate Bill 56 regarding age discrimination in employment applications.

According to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost half of those who have been out of a job for six months or more are over the age of 50. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act does not allow for discrimination against people over the age of 40, but that can be hard to prove when allowable age identifiers are utilized in the initial screening process of applicants. SB 56 addresses this loophole in a way that assures that applicants are not discriminated against due to age in a way that prevents them from even getting an initial consideration.

Employers may make age related applicant screening decisions based on misconceptions about age. For example, an employer may seek younger applicants because they believe the younger person will be more tech savvy, be more energetic, or healthier. Or, an employer may seek to hire based on age because they can pay less to a person with fewer years of experience. Such practices discriminate against applicants who are middle age or older based on myths and misinformation about age. Likewise, SB 56 can help younger applicants where an employer is making pre-conceived judgements related to lower ages.

SB 56 will also have a positive effect on making Connecticut a state where workers of all ages choose to remain. This is especially important given that our state has the sixth highest percentage of residents 60 years and older. Being an age friendly workforce state is to the benefit of our entire state.

Over the years NASW/CT has hired workers from the early twenties to those in their sixties. We have greatly benefited from these employees. Had we screened out based on age we would have loss out on excellent employees. Age discrimination is not only wrong, it makes for bad business decisions.

In the field of social work many practitioners have the choice of going into a private practice where they are their own employer, but that is not an option everyone seeks. We have heard from members in their fifties and older who report it being more difficult to attain interviews, and given their experience one can only assign age as the reason. Likewise, we have members who are employed however seek improved employment and find it difficult to make a move due to age.

All applicants, of all ages, deserve an even playing field that allows them to attain initial employment consideration by an employer. SB 56 makes that a reality and we urge support for this important bill.