



Testimony of the Hon. Dianne E. Yamin and Marie Miszewski as Co-Chairs representing the Age Well Community Council of Danbury, in support of:

Raised S.B. 56: AN ACT DETERRING AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS Aging Committee, February 9, 2021

The Age Well Community Council of Danbury is a unique collaboration of representatives from government, business, philanthropy, nonprofit and other community organizations dedicated to a community where people can age (and care for others who are aging) in ways that are relevant, healthy and meaningful to individuals, cultures and the larger community. The Council's approach is premised on the belief that no single policy, government department, organization or program can tackle or solve complex issues we face as a society. The Council is organized to address the opportunities and challenges of a growing older population in greater Danbury and our State.

The Age Well Community Council is pleased to offer our support for Senate Bill #56, which seeks to limit age discrimination for people of all ages, by prohibiting employers from asking for date of birth, age, school attendance and graduation dates on employment applications. We applaud this bipartisan coalition of supporters, inclusive of the CT Business and Industry Association.

The issue of age-related questions on job applications, such as graduation dates, can be used to identify age in the initial application process, as well as subsequent decisions regarding who moves on to an interview. If not purposeful, there may be unconscious bias at play. This bill levels the playing field.

A few key statistics make it clear why this legislation is so important.

- CT is the 6th oldest state in the nation.
- By 2022, 35% of the total US workforce will be age 50 or older.
- The two fastest growing age cohorts in the US Labor pool are those over age 75 and those age 65-74.
- In a 2018 AARP survey of people age 45 and older, 61% of respondents have either seen or experienced age discrimination, with it affecting African American women the most.
- In that same AARP survey, 44% of respondents who applied or interviewed for a job in the previous two years were asked age-related questions such as birth and graduation dates.

Age discrimination is illegal and companies can put themselves at risk when they ask for age-related information. The Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) recommends that employers do not ask for date of birth or graduation dates in the initial application. Yet, for some reason it continues to appear as a mandatory field on many applications, when even a voluntary field can create the same legal risk for employers. SHRM specifically states, "You do not need this information to interview someone. If the information is needed for background checks, collect it later in the process. That information can also be separated out so it goes only to the background check company, not to the hiring manager." **It is time to ban the practice of asking job seekers for information that is at best, completely unnecessary and at worst, completely discriminatory. The Age Well Community Council of Danbury fully supports the passage of Senate Bill 56.**