

Aging Committee

S.B. 85: *An Act Deterring Age Discrimination in Employment Applications*

Submitted by: Madeline Granato, Policy Director and Rachel Catanese, Policy Intern

February 18, 2020

The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide, nonprofit organization that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For forty-six years, CWEALF has been a leading advocate of policy solutions that enhance women's economic security and combat discrimination.

CWEALF encourages the Committee to support Senate Bill No. 85: *An Act Deterring Age Discrimination in Employment Applications*, which will prohibit employers from asking a job candidate about their age, date of birth, or dates of attendance or graduation from educational institutions.

Women, especially women of color, are more likely to experience poverty than their male counterparts. In Connecticut, nearly 11% of women and 9.3% of women age 65 and older in Connecticut live in poverty.ⁱ Protections against age discrimination will ensure the economic security of the growing population of women who are aging in Connecticut.

Nationally, despite support from social programs including Social Security, Supplemental Security Income and others, nearly two-thirds of the elderly population in poverty are women.ⁱⁱ Elderly women of color experience poverty at almost double the rate of older white women.ⁱⁱⁱ While the poverty rate for elderly white women is 12.8%, the rate for elderly Native American women is 23.4%, for elderly black women is 25.2%, and for elderly Hispanic women is 26.1%.^{iv}

Connecticut is currently the 6th oldest state in the nation. Nationally, 35% of the total U.S. workforce will be age 50 or older by 2022. According to a 2018 survey by AARP, nearly 2 out of 3 workers ages 45 and older have seen or experienced age discrimination. The survey also indicates that women are more likely than men (64% vs. 59%) to say they have seen or experienced age discrimination.^v

CWEALF urges the Committee to support Senate Bill No. 85: *An Act Deterring Age Discrimination in Employment Applications*. By prohibiting employers from asking an applicant's age, S.B. 85 will support women of all ages to obtain higher paying jobs to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

i National Women's Law Center. Retrieved from: <https://nwlc.org/state/connecticut/>

ii National Women's Law Center, *Poverty Rate Falls but Being a Woman Increases the Odds of Being Poor in America, the Wage Gap Remains Stalled, and Uninsurance Among Women Dropped by 37 Percent under the ACA*, (Accessed September 17, 2017) <https://nwlc.org/press-releases/poverty-rate-falls-but-being-a-woman-increases-the-odds-of-being-poor-in-america-the-wage-gap-remains-stalled-and-uninsurance-among-women-dropped-by-37-percent-under-the-aca/>.

iii See note ii.

iv See note ii.

v AARP. *The Value of Experience: Age Discrimination Against Older Workers Persists*. 2018. Retrieved from: https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/econ/2018/value-of-experience-age-discrimination-highlights.doi.10.26419-2Fres.00177.002.pdf