



**TESTIMONY OF
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SUBMITTED TO THE

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
U.S. SENATE**

ON

**AMERICA'S AGING WORKFORCE
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Casey, and Members of the Committee, AARP thanks you for inviting AARP to testify at today's hearing to discuss the challenges and opportunities presented by an aging workforce. With nearly 38 million members, AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. I am Laurie McCann, a Senior Attorney with AARP Foundation, the charitable affiliate of AARP, which, among other things, works to help low-income older adults earn a living. I have been working to ensure equal employment opportunities for older workers for more than 30 years.

AARP also commends you and your hardworking staff for the important report the Committee is releasing today concerning older workers. With the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) just nine days away, this is a fitting moment to document and discuss the best ways to ensure that older workers are able to keep putting their experience to work, and to spotlight those employers who demonstrate that it is simply good business sense to recruit and retain talent regardless of their age.

There are many issues facing older workers that time does not permit me to address today (e.g., workforce development, recareering, entrepreneurship, contingent work, workers with disabilities, the impact of automation, etc.). This testimony will briefly paint a picture of the aging workforce, and then discuss what AARP sees as some of the key challenges facing older workers today— age discrimination, balancing work with caregiving responsibilities for loved ones, and preparing for a financially secure retirement – and some thoughts on how we might address them.

Working Longer

It is well-known that the workforce, along with the population at large, is aging. In 1990, only 12% of the workforce was age 55 and older. In 2016, workers 55+ were 22% of the workforce, and that number is projected to continue to increase.¹ Workers age 40 and older – the population covered by the ADEA – constitute 60 percent of the labor force.² Older workers are working longer, a trend that began in the 1990s, well before the recession and before the boomer generation reached retirement age. Most of this growth is due to increased labor force participation by women.³

What is less well-known is that the labor force participation rate for *retirement-age* workers has increased substantially, and they are now the fastest growing age group in the workforce. In 1987, roughly 19% of adults ages 65-69 were in the workforce; in 2017, that number had increased by nearly 75% to around 33%. Similarly, in 1987, about 10% of those ages 70-74 were in the labor force, but in 2017, that number had almost doubled to 19%. Even among the oldest workers – those 75 and older – labor force participation doubled from about 4% in 1987 to about 8% in 2017.⁴ Moreover, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 65+ workers are projected to *continue* to be the fastest growing age group in the workforce. Between 2014 and 2024, the number of workers ages 65-74 is expected to grow by 4.5%, and the number of workers 75 and older is expected to grow by 6.4%, compared to, for example, a growth rate of about 1% for workers 25-

¹ M. Toossi & E. Torpey, *Older workers: Labor force trends and career options*, Chart 1 (May 2017), available at <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2017/article/older-workers.htm> [hereinafter *Older workers*].

² See Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by age, sex, and race, Table 3, at <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat03.htm> (accessed Dec. 2, 2017).

³ Testimony of Dr. Sara E. Rix, Consultant on Work and Aging, Hearing on *Working in Retirement: Career Reinventions and the New Workspace* 8, Fig. 2 (U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, June 24, 2015), available at https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Rix_6_24_15.pdf [hereinafter *Rix Testimony*].

⁴ All three age group percentages derived from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, at <http://data.bls.gov/pdq/querytool.jsp?survey=in> (accessed July 28, 2017).

44.⁵ Clearly, as employers need workers, they will increasingly need to attract and retain older workers and plan for a multigenerational workforce.

Significant Challenges Faced by Older Workers

Age Discrimination

In his 1967 message to Congress urging the enactment of legislation to prohibit employment discrimination against older workers, President Lyndon Johnson emphasized that “[h]undreds of thousands not yet old, not yet voluntarily retired, find themselves jobless because of arbitrary age discrimination.”⁶ Prior to the ADEA’s passage, according to a 1965 report issued by the Secretary of Labor, approximately *half* of all private sector job openings *explicitly* barred applicants over age 55, and a quarter barred consideration of those over age 45.⁷ Help wanted ads could say “only workers under 35 need apply” and employers had unbridled authority to terminate older workers based solely on age.

This year, 2017, marks the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the ADEA. While the law has achieved a great deal, age discrimination continues to be persistent and pervasive, and a significant barrier to older workers seeking reemployment or just trying to keep their jobs or advance. Most of us have witnessed examples of age discrimination—not treating someone based on their qualifications, but instead relying on negative assumptions based on their age. People in their 50s and 60s are often denied work opportunities they’re perfectly qualified for. This goes against the basic American value of treating individuals based on merit, not stereotypes. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of workers ages 45-74 report that they have either experienced or observed age discrimination in the workplace.⁸ Interestingly, workers 57-64 are even more likely (71%) than those 65-74 (64%) to have seen or experienced age discrimination.⁹

Older workers are less likely to become unemployed than younger workers, but once jobless, older workers experience far longer spells of unemployment than younger workers, and age discrimination is likely the main reason why. In AARP’s study about how unemployed older workers found reemployment, over half said that age discrimination had negatively affected their ability to find a job.¹⁰

Age discrimination in hiring is the most difficult form of discrimination to detect and prove. About one-fifth of older workers say they’ve experienced not getting hired for a job they applied for due to age.¹¹ AARP has increasingly witnessed companies engaging in a number of age-related practices

⁵ See *Older workers*, *supra* n. 1, Chart 2.

⁶ President Lyndon B. Johnson: *Special Message to the Congress Proposing Programs for Older Americans* (Jan. 23, 1967) (proposing several legislative measures including the ADEA), available at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=28139>.

⁷ U.S. Dep’t of Labor, *The Older Worker: Age Discrimination in Employment*, Report of the Secretary of Labor Under Section 715 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 6 (1965) (“Wirtz Report”); 113 Cong. Rec. 1089-90 (Jan. 23, 1967).

⁸ AARP, *Staying Ahead of the Curve 2013: The AARP Work and Career Study, Older Workers in an Uneasy Job Market* 28, Table 10 (January, 2014) available at http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/general/2014/Staying-Ahead-of-the-Curve-2013-The-Work-and-Career-Study-AARP-res-gen.pdf [hereinafter *Staying Ahead of the Curve*].

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ G. Koenig, L. Trawinski, *et al.*, *The Long Road Back: Struggling to Find Work after Unemployment* 8, Fig 6 (AARP Pub. Pol’y Inst., Mar. 2015), available at http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2015-03/The%20Long%20Road%20Back_INSIGHT-new.pdf.

¹¹ *Staying Ahead of the Curve*, *supra* n. 8, at 33, Fig 5.

that directly or indirectly discriminate against older workers, such as: specifying a requirement for “digital natives” or a *maximum* number of years of experience (e.g., no more than 10 years) or in the qualifications, limiting recruitment efforts for entry-level positions to college campuses and requiring a college-affiliated email address in order to apply, and using algorithms for online job application sites to screen out older applicants.¹²

Among the age discrimination charges filed with the EEOC, complaints about discriminatory discharge constitute, by far, the largest number of charges filed under the ADEA.¹³ We at AARP and AARP Foundation are increasingly noticing articles, reports, and workshops about the need to “unclog the pipeline” and nudge out those in their 60s or past traditional retirement age in order to “reduce costs” or “make way” for the workers behind them.¹⁴ Yet, “[t]here’s no evidence to support that increased employment by older people is going to hurt younger people in any way,”¹⁵ according to Alicia Munnell, the Director of the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. According to a report done in the UK, more older workers working means more jobs and higher wages for younger workers.¹⁶ “Sure, someone having one specific job means that another person cannot have that job but the aggregate effect is entirely the other way around.”¹⁷

Employers are increasingly recognizing the tremendous value that older workers contribute to their businesses – both to the productivity and to their bottom lines. The age 50+ segment of the workforce is the most engaged cohort across all generations, which translates into higher productivity, increased revenues, and improved business outcomes.¹⁸ Research study after research study finds that a diverse workforce is a more productive, better performing, more innovative workforce, and this holds for age diversity too. Age diversity and multigenerational workforces “can improve organizational performance, if it is managed well.”¹⁹ Yet, just a tiny

¹² See Testimony of Laurie A. McCann, AARP Foundation Litigation, Hearing on *The ADEA @ 50 – More Relevant Than Ever* (EEOC, June 14, 2017), available at <https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/meetings/6-14-17/mccann.cfm>, for more discussion of age-discriminatory hiring practices.

¹³ See EEOC, *Statutes by Issue (Charges filed with EEOC): FY 2010 - FY 2016*, at https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/enforcement/statutes_by_issue.cfm (accessed July 31, 2017).

¹⁴ See e.g., Prudential, *Why Employers Should Care about the Cost of Delayed Retirements* (2017), available at http://research.prudential.com/documents/rp/Sl20_Final_ADA_Cost-of-Delayed_1-4-17.pdf; S. Krouse, “U.S. Companies Have a New 401(k) Fix: Spend More,” *Wall St. J.* (July 17, 2017), available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-companies-have-a-new-401-k-fix-spend-more-1500283804?mg=prod/accounts-wsj>.

¹⁵ M. Sedensky, Are older workers taking jobs from young?, *USA Today* (Jan 4, 2014), at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2014/01/04/will-surge-of-older-workers-take-jobs-from-young/4305187/>. See also, A. Munnell & A Yanyuan Wu, *Are Aging Baby Boomers Squeezing Young Workers Out Of Jobs?* (Oct. 2012), available at <http://crr.bc.edu/briefs/are-aging-baby-boomers-squeezing-young-workers-out-of-jobs/>.

¹⁶ D. Hyde, Older workers “do not steal jobs from young,” *The Telegraph* (Mar. 11, 2015), at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/11462712/Older-workers-do-not-steal-jobs-from-young.html> (citing R. Altmann, *A New Vision for Older Workers: Retain, Retrain, Recruit* (2015), available at http://telegraph3.digidip.net/visit?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.genesysdownload.co.uk%2Frosaltmann%2FAltman_090315_Final.pdf).

¹⁷ T. Worstall, Of Course Older Workers Do Not Steal Jobs from the Young; Fallacies Are Fallacies, *Forbes* (Mar. 11, 2015), at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/timworstall/2015/03/11/of-course-older-workers-do-not-steal-jobs-from-the-young-fallacies-are-fallacies/#ba6534e2b074>.

¹⁸ See generally, AARP, *A Business Case for Workers Age 50+: A Look at the Value of Experience* (2015), available at http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/general/2015/A-Business-Case-Report-for-Workers%20Age%2050Plus-res-gen.pdf.

¹⁹ L. Trawinski, *Disrupting Aging in the Workplace: Profiles in Intergenerational Diversity Leadership 2* (AARP Pub. Pol’y Inst., Oct. 2016), available at http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2016-11/213719%20Disrupt%20Aging%20in%20the%20Workforce%20Report_FINAL_links.pdf.

fraction – only about 8% – of CEOs include “age” as a dimension of their diversity and inclusion policies and strategies.²⁰ “[C]ompanies have long recognized that there is a business case for building a diverse and inclusive workforce because it can lead to greater engagement, teamwork, performance, and innovation.”²¹ For that reason, more forward-thinking companies are adding “age” to their diversity and inclusion policies and practices. Other examples of best practices include:

- Ensuring recruitment materials are designed for talent of all ages.
- Creating apprenticeship programs open to people of all ages to help recruit and retain talent.
- Designing special programs to help people reenter the workforce following an extended absence, i.e., absence for childcare or elder caregiving.
- Developing cross-generational mentoring programs to help facilitate knowledge transfer—a critical need for many companies.
- Conducting strategic workforce assessments to better understand the impact of the aging workforce on their organizations.
- Investing in the learning and skills development of workers of all ages, including older workers.
- Offering programs such as phased retirement, job-sharing, caregiving leave, and other work arrangements that meet workers’ needs.

There are many best practices employers can adopt and are adopting to eschew age discrimination and benefit from building a multigenerational workforce. However, it is important to remember that these efforts are a supplement to, not a substitute for, strong legal protections against age discrimination in the workplace, and enforcement of those protections. Unfortunately, over the years, the courts have failed to interpret the ADEA as a remedial civil rights statute; instead, courts have too often narrowly interpreted its protections and broadly construed its exceptions.

For instance, in 2009, the Supreme Court made it far more difficult to prove age discrimination than to prove discrimination based on race, religion, or gender. In the case of *Gross v. FBL Financial Services, Inc.*,²² the Court imposed a much higher burden of proof on workers who allege age discrimination than on those who allege other types of job discrimination. After *Gross*, it is no longer enough to prove that age discrimination tainted the employer’s conduct; instead, older workers must prove that age played a *decisive* role, a significantly higher standard of proof. In short, the *Gross* decision signaled to employers that some amount of *proven* age discrimination is legally allowed.

Discrimination is discrimination, and older workers who can prove they have been discriminated against should be treated no less favorably by the courts than other workers challenging workplace discrimination. The most important and best step policymakers could take to remove barriers and enhance opportunity for older workers would be to strengthen the nation’s age discrimination laws.

Thus, an excellent first step to restoring a level playing field for older workers would be for Congress to pass the bipartisan Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act (POWADA, S. 443), sponsored and cosponsored by the leaders of this Committee. AARP greatly appreciates the leadership and consistent support that Ranking Member Casey and Chairman Collins have demonstrated in championing this bipartisan legislation, which would re-level the playing field for

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² 557 U.S. 167, 129 S. Ct. 2343 (2009).

older workers under the law. Across party and ideological lines, roughly 8 in 10 American voters age 50+ say it is important for Congress to take action and restore workplace protections against age discrimination.²³ Congress should pass this law as soon as possible.

In addition, in light of the impending 50th anniversary of the passage of the ADEA, the Senate Aging Committee should make it a priority to hold a series of hearings to learn more about the challenges facing older workers in today's economy, and what changes are needed to update and strengthen the ADEA to adequately protect older workers. As was the case with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – where Congress was compelled to restore the statute's strength by enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 – AARP believes that it is well past time to update and strengthen the ADEA so that it can respond to the challenges facing today's older workers in today's workplace.

Balancing Employment and Family Caregiving Responsibilities

Family caregivers are the most important source of support for people with chronic or other health conditions, disabilities, or functional limitations, and the backbone of our country's system of long-term services and supports. Millions of family caregivers help their loved ones live at home and in their communities, by helping them with activities such as bathing, dressing, eating, transportation, housework, and managing finances. About 40 million family caregivers provide the equivalent of about \$470 billion annually in unpaid care to their loved ones.²⁴ Most of us are, have been, or will be a family caregiver.

Most family caregivers are employed and juggle work and caregiving responsibilities. The majority (60 percent) of family caregivers worked at a paying job at some point during their caregiving experience in 2014—an estimated 23.9 million working caregivers of adults.²⁵ They were more likely to be male (66 percent) than female (55 percent). Nearly two in three (63 percent) were caring for an individual age 65 or older. Most (55 percent) expect to have some caregiving responsibility in the next five years too.²⁶ On average, employed caregivers work the equivalent of a full-time job (34.7 hours a week) on top of their caregiving and other responsibilities.²⁷

Employers have an interest in supporting their employees who are family caregivers so they do not lose talented workers. It has been estimated that U.S. businesses lose more than \$25 billion annually in lost productivity due to absenteeism among full-time working caregivers.²⁸ Flexible work arrangements are important to workers of all ages, but can be especially critical to those who are also family caregivers. Among working caregivers of adults, a little more than half report that their employer offers flexible work hours and/or paid sick days, and about one-third say that paid family

²³ AARP, *Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act: National Public Opinion Report* 9, Fig. 9 (June 2012), available at https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/work_and_retirement/powada-national.pdf.

²⁴ S. Reinhard, L. Feinberg, R. Choula & A. Houser, *Valuing the Invaluable: 2015 Update, Undeniable Progress, but Big Gaps Remain* (AARP Pub. Pol'y Inst., 2015), available at <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2015/valuing-the-invaluable-2015-update-undeniable-progress.pdf> [hereinafter *Valuing the Invaluable*].

²⁵ L. F. Feinberg, *The Dual Pressures of Family Caregiving and Employment*, at <https://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2016/the-dual-pressures-of-family-caregiving-and-employment.html> (AARP Pub. Pol'y Inst., 2016).

²⁶ See Nat'l Alliance for Caregiving and AARP Public Pol'y Institute, *Caregiving in the U.S. 2015*, at 55-62 (June 2015), available at <https://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2015/caregiving-in-the-united-states-2015.html>.

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Valuing the Invaluable*, supra n. 24, at 7.

leave is offered by their employer.²⁹ Looking at the workforce as whole, however, only 14% of all workers have access to employer-provided paid family leave.³⁰ Many employers are instituting programs to support their employee-caregivers – e.g., providing resources and tools on caregiving, equipping managers to be reasonably accommodating, offering flexible work arrangements and paid/unpaid leave, and providing other benefits such as subsidized back-up care³¹ – but much more needs to be done.

AARP appreciates Chairman Collins' bipartisan leadership in sponsoring the RAISE Family Caregivers Act (S. 1028, H.R. 3759). This bill would implement the bipartisan recommendation of the federal Commission on Long-Term Care and the consensus report of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine³² to require the development of a strategy to support family caregivers, similar in scope to the strategy developed to address Alzheimer's disease. We applaud the Senate's passage of this legislation in September and urge that Congress enact this legislation this year. Chairman Collins has also led by sponsoring the Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act of 2017 (S. 1188, H.R. 2535), which would extend the Lifespan Respite Care Program for family caregivers of children and adults with special needs, and working with Senator Murray to introduce the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act (S. 591, H.R. 1472) to improve supports for military caregivers. Finally, because caregiving also imposes significant out-of-pocket costs on family caregivers, AARP is advocating passage of the bipartisan Credit for Caring Act (S. 1151, H.R. 2505), a tax credit that would help offset at least a portion of the caregiving expenses incurred by family caregivers.

Preparing for a Financially Secure Retirement

As noted above, older workers are working longer. The reasons for this trend are multiple and not clear-cut.³³ However, finances clearly play a significant role. Current financial need is by far the most important factor why older workers ages 45-74 work.³⁴ As expected, the younger the worker, the higher the importance placed on money as the motivation for working, but even among workers age 65-74, current financial need is cited by 57% as the most important reason for working.³⁵

Fewer workers are covered by a defined benefit (DB) pension plan that provides guaranteed lifetime income. Among households covered by any employer-sponsored retirement plan, only 13% in 2014 were covered by a defined benefit plan.³⁶ Near-retiree households "represent the last generation of workers to enjoy widespread DB pension coverage...."³⁷ Even more distressing,

²⁹ AARP Pub. Pol. Inst. & Nat'l Alliance on Caregiving, *Caregiving in the U.S. 2015*, at 59, Fig. 65 (June 2015), available at http://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2015_CaregivingintheUS_Final-Report-June-4_WEB.pdf.

³⁰ Nat'l Partnership for Women & Families, *Paid Leave*, at <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/paid-leave.html> (accessed July 30, 2017).

³¹ See e.g., J. Nobel, J. Weiss *et al.*, *Supporting Caregivers in the Workplace: A Practical Guide for Employers* (AARP & Northeast Bus. Group on Health, Sept. 2017), available at <https://nebg.org/an-employers-guide-to-caregiving/>.

³² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, *Families Caring for an Aging America*, available at <https://nam.edu/families-caring-for-an-aging-america/>.

³³ *Rix Testimony*, *supra* n. 3, at 2.

³⁴ *Staying Ahead of the Curve*, *supra* n. 8, at 40, Fig. 7.

³⁵ *Id.*, at 41, Table 17.

³⁶ See EBRI, *FAQs About Benefits—Retirement Issues*, Fig. 1 (accessed Dec. 2, 2017), at <https://www.ebri.org/publications/benfaq/index.cfm?fa=retfaq14>.

³⁷ N. Rhee & I. Boivie, *The Continuing Retirement Savings Crisis* 5 (Nat'l Inst. for Ret. Sec., Mar. 2015), available at http://www.nirsonline.org/storage/nirs/documents/RSC%202015/final_rsc_2015.pdf.

many retirees who worked their entire lives and earned a modest pension are now seeing those promises broken and their pensions cut – not years before they plan to retire, but while already retired and living on those pensions – and they cannot go back to work. Passed in the waning hours of the 113th Congress, the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act reneged on ERISA’s core promise prohibiting cutbacks in already earned and accrued benefits. This is why AARP is supporting Sen. Brown’s “Butch Lewis Act of 2017” (S. 2147, H.R. 4444), which would provide low cost loans to eligible multiemployer pension plans to enable them to continue to pay earned pensions and fund their long-term pension commitments, and we urge Congress to include it in any end-of-year funding bill.

As if nonexistent pensions or cutbacks in accrued pensions were not enough, retirement savings are also woefully inadequate. About 3 in ten near-retiree-age (55-64) households have *no retirement savings at all*,³⁸ and the median retirement savings of all near-retiree households was only \$14,500 in 2013.³⁹ Among just those near-retiree households that had some savings, their median account balance was only \$104,000 – 62% had less than one year’s worth of income saved.⁴⁰ Wage stagnation over the last 40 years,⁴¹ combined with rising costs of living, has likely made it much harder to save.

Despite decades of federal incentives, employer sponsorship of retirement savings plans has not grown, especially among small employers. Retirement saving should be simple and should incorporate: automatic payroll deduction; appropriate low-cost, diversified investment options such as target date funds; and the option for periodic or lifetime payouts upon retirement at a reasonable cost. In addition to strategies such as auto-enrollment for workers with savings plans at work, AARP has championed policies to enable the 55 million Americans without access to a workplace plan to be able to save for retirement out of their regular paychecks. While federal action has stalled,⁴² numerous states have addressed the gap by enacting programs that will make low-cost savings options more available to their residents – options that will yield significant savings for state budgets in the future. AARP has played a leading role in states adopting these initiatives. In addition, AARP believes it is vitally important to ensure that any retirement savings are protected. For example, savers should be able to trust that the investment advice they receive is free from financial conflicts of interest. Plain and simple, investment advice should be in the best interests of the investor, not the investment advisor. We remain committed to preserving and implementing the strongest possible fiduciary standard for retirement investment advice.

Ideally, employer practices and public policies can maximize older workers’ choices to work if they need or want to or to retire with economic security; most hope to keep working or combine work with retirement. Nearly three-fourths (72%) of older workers ages 45-74 say they plan to work “in retirement.”⁴³ But there are limits to workers’ self-determination in this regard; data demonstrate a large gap between active workers’ expectations about their retirement age vs. their actual behavior. For instance, nearly 4 in 10 say they plan to work until 70 and older, yet only 4% of

³⁸ *Id.*, at 11.

³⁹ *Id.*, at Fig. 8.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ See L. Mishel, E. Gould, *et al.*, *Wage Stagnation in Nine Charts*, Figs. 2, 4 (Ec. Pol’y Inst., Jan. 6, 2015), at <http://www.epi.org/publication/charting-wage-stagnation/>.

⁴² Various proposals to facilitate open multiple employer savings plans have been put forward in Congress, including by Sens. Collins and Nelson in this Congress and Sens. Hatch and Wyden in the last Congress. AARP is supportive of open MEPs as long as they carry strong fiduciary and other consumer protections.

⁴³ *Staying Ahead of the Curve*, *supra* n. 8, at 24, Fig. 2.

retirees actually retire that late.⁴⁴ Unplanned events like job loss, health problems, and caregiving responsibilities are just some of the reasons people do not work as long as expected. Practices and policies must empower workers to work longer, but they must also enable workers to retire with dignity and financial security after a lifetime of work. We should not *expect or require* people to work until they drop.

Conclusion

Today, Americans are healthier than earlier generations, often working into their 70s and beyond, and they continue to have big dreams and goals. It is now common to see four or five different generations working side by side in the workplace, and that trend will continue in the future, as long as we don't let outdated stereotypes about age get in the way. Ageist stereotypes in the workplace don't come from nowhere – they reflect obsolete beliefs about aging in our larger culture. Age bias may be the last acceptable prejudice. But stereotyping based on false and negative assumptions about people of any age is unacceptable. And it needs to be challenged.

We need to change the conversation in this country about what it means to grow older. The way people are aging is changing, but many of our attitudes and stereotypes about aging are not. We need to challenge those old stereotypes and attitudes and spark new solutions so more people can choose how they want to live and age. There is much that can and needs to be done to ensure that older workers can continue to make valuable contributions to their employers, the economy, and the nation as a whole. AARP again thanks this Committee for inviting us to testify and we look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to address these critical issues.

⁴⁴ L. Greenwald, C. Copeland, *et al.*, *The 2017 Retirement Confidence Survey: Many Workers Lack Retirement Confidence and Feel Stressed About Retirement Preparations* 20, Fig. 26 (EBRI, Mar. 21, 2017), available at https://www.ebri.org/pdf/briefspdf/EBRI_IB_431_RCS.21Mar17.pdf.