

**Testimony to the Senate Special Committee on Aging
“Back to Work: Empowering Alabama’s Aging Workforce”**

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Good day Dr. Tamara Payne and members of the Special Senate Committee on Aging.

I am honored and humbled to speak with you today regarding both my professional and personal experiences with this topic. My name is Ramona Reach. I am a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. I went back to school when I was 43 years old and obtained my Bachelors in business administration through Faulkner University’s fast pace program.

I am also the office manager for Acton Road Pediatrics, LLC.

Alabama has a wealth of knowledgeable older individuals who put their families before their careers. By this I mean the stay at home mom and the hard working mid-level employee. I can speak in terms of us as I have walked this same path. The knowledge I can speak to your committee of is of dedication sometimes out of desperation and loyalty with a cause that our +50 generation have to offer a company’s workforce.

First, dedication sometimes out of desperation is brought on by having to go to work to provide the basic needs of your family. Then the family dynamics change and the dedication becomes a life experience which has the potential to propel you into a new career. Jefferson State Community College provided such a place for the two associates I recently hired. Both Rose and Linda came to their career choices basically out of family dynamic changes. These ladies are present and ready to work every day and have improved the moral of their coworkers. They are teaching by example how to work for a company verses how to work at a company. I have had the opportunity to watch both these ladies take on their current duties with a drive and dedication to learn and perform them correctly. They are not afraid to ask questions and make the changes necessary to be successful. It has been a pleasure to watch the dynamic between our senior associates (10 to 20 years younger). The senior associates picked up quickly on the drive and dedication and many have made a conscious effort to spend time with them. It is the unseen teaching of Rose and Linda in those around them that is severely lacking in our young and sometimes disenchanting work force. In the short time these ladies have shown exemplary dedication.

Loyalty with cause is a normal and expected attribute to a hard working individual with a drive to be successful. Loyalty presented both ways as the company to the employee and the employee to the company. In the short time these ladies have been with Acton Road Pediatrics I have watch a change start and the working at is becoming the working for our company.

If we as members of the American workforce and owners of business overlook the positive resources that our senior + 50 have to offer our younger generation of workers we are doing an injustice to humanity. If we do not have the + 50 generation helping to guide, instruct, nurture and share life experiences with those that have not had the opportunity to experience these for themselves we lose a valuable opportunity. Opportunities in America are growing and the workforce has skilled positons opening up. Who will teach them if we do not tap into individuals that have shown the ability to take the initiative to go back to school and get the training and bring life experiences to share with our world?

I appreciate the opportunity to share what is happening at our office with you. I deeply hope you will openly consider what we have to lose if we lose the +50 generation workforce. I look forward to responding to any questions you may have to support this esteem cause.

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