



## Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act (POWADA)

Today, Americans are working more and longer than they ever have. When older workers lose their jobs, they are far more likely than other workers to join the ranks of the long-term unemployed. And discrimination appears to be a significant factor in older workers' long-term unemployment.

Enforcement statistics from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) show complaints of age discrimination are climbing. In 2000, the EEOC received roughly 16,000 charges of age discrimination when accounting for 20 percent of all discrimination charges filed that year. In 2015, the EEOC received over 20,000 complaints, when accounting for 23 percent of all discrimination charges filed.

A 2012 survey conducted by the AARP found that nearly two-thirds of respondents had seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace. And, in a 2015 survey of older workers who lost their jobs, 51 percent of older workers reported that age discrimination negatively affected their ability to get a new job.

### The Problem

*The Supreme Court has made it harder for older workers to prove discrimination*

- Despite older workers' clear need for strong workplace protections from discrimination, the Supreme Court's 2009 decision in *Gross v. FBL Financial Services, Inc.* has weakened protections against age discrimination under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA).
- *Gross* requires that plaintiffs seeking to prove age discrimination in employment demonstrate that age was the **sole motivating factor** for the employer's adverse action.
- Also known as "but-for" causation, this heightened evidentiary standard upends decades of precedent that had allowed plaintiffs to prove discrimination by showing that a discriminatory motive was *one of the factors* on which an employer's adverse action was based.

### The Solution

*POWADA ensures that older workers have the protections they need*

- POWADA simply returns to the pre-2009 evidentiary threshold applied in discrimination claims, replacing the *Gross* "but-for" test with the mixed-motive test that courts applied prior to 2009.
- This bill amends four laws – the ADEA, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the ADA, and the Rehabilitation Act – to ensure that all victims of discrimination, including older workers, can have their claims adjudicated fairly without the affirmative obligation of refuting every purported nondiscriminatory motive offered by the wrongdoer for his or her discriminatory action.

**H.R.2650, the Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act** will restore workplace protections for older workers.