

ognition that Federal action and State efforts should complement each other in eliminating this particular form of social injustice.

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President Johnson, in recommending a measure such as H.R. 4221 in his Message on Older Americans earlier this year, summed up the older worker problem and its consequences in these terms:

Hundreds of thousands not yet old . . . find themselves jobless because of arbitrary age discrimination.

In economic terms, this is a serious—and senseless—loss to the nation on the move. But the greater loss is the cruel sacrifice in happiness and well-being which joblessness imposes on these citizens and their families. There is little else to be said—but everything to be done. It lies with this Committee, and with the Congress, to decide how much longer Man will, by his oversight and his sometimes meanness, pile this additional element of mockery onto the bitterness which Nature—as it is so far discovered—seems to have given Life in its later chapters.

Secretary WIRTZ. The problem before us is so obvious and so plain I think to belabor it would be to dull it. Everybody is against discrimination because of age.

That leaves the question of why nothing has been done about it. I think the answer to that is pretty obvious. First, there is no realization in the country as a whole of the degree of discrimination that takes place because of age. Second, a vague uncertainty as to how much of this can be cleared up by law. Third, I think there is an inclination to think that all we need to do for the problem of old age is to provide for security. What we eventually have to do is provide for employment, which is harder. What has been stated here is that the “has beens” don’t have a lobby.

My testimony covers matters familiar to the committee. The extent to which there is discrimination on the basis of age is hardly believable. There are about three-quarters of a million workers in this country 45 years of age or older who are out of work.

Our bill for unemployment insurance for older workers is about three-quarters of a billion dollars a year. There should be a much more effective way of spending that money.

It is hard to realize but it is a fact that almost all private job openings in this country are closed to people 65 years of age or older; about half of them are barred to applicants over 55; and about a quarter of them are closed at age 45. The realization of what that means in some peoples’ lives is hard to conceive. Age discrimination is bad business, inhuman and indecent and it is completely unnecessary.

Very briefly, the bill which I referred to in my statement as H.R. 4221, which is identical to the others bills which you are considering, contains several provisions or several different approaches to the problem.

There is primarily section 3, which, in conjunction with other sections of the bill, provides for taking care of the serious educational problem involved. We have arthritis of our attitude about this matter of when people are no longer able to produce. We don’t realize what the life scientists and technologists have done is to extend the usefulness of peoples’ lives almost without limitation, at least up to ages 60 and 65 in almost all occupations.

We still think we are living in an age when life wore people out early. We do not realize the change. There is a tremendous amount of education to be done and the bill contemplates that as first order of business.