

We believe the education and research program provided by this bill and the prohibitions of age discrimination which it includes are vital first steps in what we hope will be the development of a sane manpower policy for America in this day and age.

We also believe that, for those 65 and older, an enthusiastic response to this bill by Congress would stimulate employment opportunities which could provide needed supplemental income and a productive use of free time and, consequently, a relief from the loneliness and boredom suffered by the retired.

What incredible blindness has met this poor, benighted generation of Americans who hit the over-45 and over-50 skids just after World War II and who, by the dubious grace of modern science, have had their lifespan extended into the souring seventies.

Most of them, more often than not, felt age discrimination in one way or another and had difficulty in holding onto jobs even though the American economy was mushrooming like an atom explosion.

The technological changes of the past 20 years have blown away many of the oldtime patterns of employment. It used to be that trades were learned in youth and persons continued to work at their trade until death or retirement.

A skilled man in middle age who loses his job will seek to carry on his trade in a new place of employment. But if his skills are obsolete or too specific he is unlikely to obtain other skilled work and he may be obliged to enter the ranks of the semiskilled or unskilled—with consequent loss of status and income.

Older workers who have received no training in youth are the most unfavorably placed. Their choice of jobs in the labor market is usually confined to those that others would not accept. There is evidence, for example, that older workers will even gravitate toward the heavier jobs, though this is obviously unsuitable on health grounds.

As the choice of alternative work becomes more restricted, labor turnover declines sharply with age. In the early years of adulthood when choice is at its widest, voluntary change is the most important general reason for changing jobs. But by the middle 50's there is evidence that job loss outweighs all other reasons.

Older workers will not change jobs unless they are obliged to do so. Their reluctance has an objective basis. Should the continuity of their employment be broken their chances of getting back into the labor force are appreciably worse than that of younger persons.

Frequently older workers have been underemployed or employed in a position requiring far less than their skills. And when layoffs have occurred, they have been forced into unwanted retirement before they were either financially or emotionally prepared for it. Generally speaking, however, discrimination in hiring against the older worker has affected mostly those with lower skills, with less opportunity to prepare financially for later life, with less job stability and therefore little or no private pension benefits—so these workers have been forced to leave on inadequate social security benefits or public assistance.

And it is precisely at this stage in retirement that the post-World War II elderly get their second and most severe dose of discrimination. They represent 1 in 5 of the Nation's total poor and 3 years ago the Nation decided to launch a major war on poverty, with our troops marshaled by the Federal Office of Economic Opportunity.