

mented that older people, when unemployed, remain unemployed much longer than younger people.

A recent Administration on Aging staff study of the older worker showed that among men workers between the ages of 16 and 24 who had been unemployed at some time during 1966, the average number of weeks of unemployment were seven. Among those men workers between the ages of 45 and 64, the average number of weeks of unemployment was approximately 19. In fact, in recent years, older people have made up around 40 percent or more than of the long-term unemployed in our country.

Three years ago when I was the executive secretary of the State commission on aging in California, the commission and the California Department of Employment were requested by the legislature to undertake a joint study of how employment opportunities for older persons could be improved throughout the state.

One of the several projects that was a part of the study conducted by a prominent management consultant firm, interviewed a select group of employers and labor unions to obtain a record of their experience in hiring and employing older workers.

One of the most significant findings of the survey was the sharp distinction made between the older worker as an employee as against the older worker as a job applicant. When employed, the older worker was frequently preferred over the younger one, especially for skilled or supervisory positions. Among the positive qualities of older workers mentioned by both employers and labor union representatives interviewed in the survey were stability, skill, and experience.

However when the older worker became an applicant for a job, employer attitudes changed. In this situation the survey showed that experiences and past work record were substantially less important to the new employer.

I think further exploration would find that arbitrary age discrimination practices and stereotyped attitudes about the ability of older people—and we have some terrible misconceptions here—play a major role in barring older workers from fair employment consideration when changing jobs.

As the Secretary of Labor pointed out in his report to Congress, nearly one-half of all private job openings are not available to persons age 55 and over; and nearly a quarter of such openings are closed to persons 45 and over.

This trend needs to be reversed in a period where there is an acknowledged need for qualified persons in many skilled and service occupations and where there is a general recognition that work and useful activity constitute for many older people a principal source of good health and emotional stability.

Federal legislation is necessary at this time in order to provide uniformity across the country in the prevention of discrimination because of age. Only 23 States have such legislation at the present. It is also essential in view of the ever-increasing mobility of labor from State to State and the need to protect all of the Nation's older workers.

I believe the provisions of these bills would make a substantial and thoughtful impact on the problem of age discrimination in employment. Section 3 which would give the Secretary of Labor authority to conduct research studies should fill a major gap that now exists