

thinking of employers who apparently feel that a person out of work over 45 years of age doesn't deserve much consideration.

Today, throughout this Nation we have many, many well-qualified persons, able-bodied, intelligent, experienced people who could fill almost any job within the realm of employment and they just can't get an interview. This is a serious problem.

Of course, today we have higher employment in the country and our unemployment figures are a little low right now, but over the long haul these people between the ages of 45 and 65 find it most difficult and practically impossible to secure a position.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today to testify in behalf of this legislation that I have sponsored for many years in the U.S. Congress to prevent age discrimination in employment opportunities. It pleases me to see that the administration has finally taken action on this measure.

The middle-aged worker in the United States is chronologically sandwiched between the beginner and the retiree. And, although we rarely realize it, he is feeling the pressure of both groups in his effort to maintain his place in the labor force. The young are crowding in from behind, and the trend toward rigid retirement standards is mandatorily limiting his work span—this in spite of the fact that he can look forward to longer and healthier later years than his grandfather or his father.

The problem usually does not arise unless the older worker—generally considered to be age 40 and up—suddenly finds himself without a job. It is one of the cruel paradoxes of our time that older workers holding jobs are considered invaluable because of their experience and stability. But, let that same worker become unemployed, and he is considered "too old" to be hired. Yet, once employed, the older worker can look forward to longer stretches between jobs.

This problem is already severe and it is growing more so. The older worker who becomes unemployed, even though he many have a spotless and distinguished record of achievement and competence, is assailed by all kinds of slings and arrows of bad fortune.

For one, longrun occupational shifts work against the older worker. The jobs which are growing in importance today are concentrated more in white collar and highly technical occupations; they impose requirements that the older worker is less likely to possess than a younger competitor. This is especially true when the worker has become unemployed because of his job—even perhaps the first and only job he ever held—has become obsolete.

Another reason is the effect of the growth of private pension plans. This device to protect the worker against need and worry in old age has, paradoxically enough, brought on wider use of age restrictions. Because it is often not possible to earn enough credits for a pension and because often there is resentment against older entrant into these plans to earn enough credits for a pension, and because often there is resentment against an older entrant for reaping the benefits that have been created by years of contributions by longtime employees, many employers refuse to hire such workers. Furthermore, pensions have encouraged the practices of automatic retirement at a fixed age, usually 65.

I might point out these young ladies are forced to retire at a very early age and they are confronted with a very real problem in being