

Thus, in jobs where accuracy is more important than speed, older persons have proven themselves most capable.

2. Illness, industrial accidents, and absentee rates are frequently cited as factors in not hiring older persons. The fact of the matter is that older workers have fewer accidents, although when they do have an accident, their recovery periods are longer. The net results, according to this study, is that the overall absenteeism rate falls steadily up to age 60, rises slightly thereafter, but nevertheless employees between 65 and 75 are absent only two-thirds as much as those less than 30 years of age.

3. Industrial welfare policies are also cited as a factor employers cite as being against older persons, the claim being that the cost of health and welfare plans is higher for an older work force. This study brings out the fact that this depends on the terms and coverage of the plans. For example, while the incidence of long illnesses and hospitalization is greater for an older employee, maternity care for employees and dependents is costlier with a younger group.

The report concludes that while the cost of group life, hospital and medical-surgical benefits is generally higher for older employees, "the difference is very minor when viewed in light of aggregate employment costs."

4. Some employers have considered it uneconomical to train middle-aged applicants who have only 15 to 20 years remaining before retirement age. The study reveals that offsetting this is the high turnover rate among the younger workers. "If a company should hire and train 100 workers at the age of 20 and another 100 at the age of 45, total years of service might well be greater for the latter," the study concludes.

Mr. Chairman, I cite these examples of employer misconceptions concerning older workers to dramatize the belief I hold that this is not a closed area where education and further study would be a waste of the taxpayer's dollars.

For these reasons, I support H.R. 3651, introduced by the distinguished chairman of this committee. I am particularly pleased to observe that the bill provides for research in this area "with a view to reducing barriers to the unemployment of older persons, and the promotion of measures for utilizing their skills * * *." The studies I alluded to strongly suggest that further research into this area would be most rewarding and proper publication of the findings highly advantageous to employers and employees of advanced years.

I should add that the Federal Government continues to be one of the biggest offenders of discriminatory hiring practices based on age. Although an Executive statement of policy was issued on March 14, 1963, relative to doing away with discrimination in hiring based on age, it appears that stronger action is needed. Legislation embracing Federal hiring practices should be enacted to give the effect of law to the declaration of policy so as to make certain that the Federal Government gives older workers an equal opportunity to secure employment.

It is my objective to assure senior citizens an equal opportunity with others to engage in gainful employment which they are physically and