

Formerly NJ Foundation for Aging

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*Statement from  
NJAAW's Executive Director Cathy Rowe, DrPH,  
at the Governor's virtual bill signing for  
S397/A681*



**TRENTON, NJ (Oct. 5, 2021)** – NJAAW's Executive Director Cathy Rowe, DrPH, was invited to speak at the Governor's virtual bill signing of S397/A681 ([youtu.be/tsljUgTnrR0](https://youtu.be/tsljUgTnrR0)) – legislation to extend protections against age discrimination.

"I am honored to be here to celebrate this bill being signed into NJ law," Dr. Rowe said.

"The notion of 65 being a magical retirement age goes back to a time when most Americans worked for a single employer for most of their career, large companies guaranteed generous retirement plans, we only expected to live five to 10 years after retirement and, let's not forget – most women were not in the paid workforce. So much has changed and our ideas of when to work and when to retire must change, too.

"Aging well is everyone's goal. And the ability to work as long as we want and are able to is an important part of NJ becoming an Age-Friendly state. Employment for older adults is recognized by the World Health Organization, the International Federation on Aging and AARP as one of the elements of healthy aging for several reasons.

"Of course, employment provides income and economic security. The 2019 NJ Elder Economic Security Index shows that many of our residents over 65 live far too close to the poverty line to meet their housing, health, and essential needs if they are not working. While Social Security was never intended to be a sole source of income, it is, in reality, the *only* income for a sizable share of New Jersey's older residents.

"But employment also provides so much more. Whether a part-time job or a long career, employment has positive impacts on someone's overall well-being by providing social connections and purpose, and it allows people to share years of experience and expertise. Many find their vocation is an essential part of their identity that they have been passionate about for years. We also must look to the near future, where by 2030, we will have more residents over the age of 60 than in our schools. That will have a profound impact on our labor pool and employment practices.

“NJAAW applauds the passage of this bill that eliminates a mandatory retirement age. We applaud that it recognizes aging as we work towards diversity, equity and inclusion. We applaud that it removes the ability to discriminate against an individual based solely on their age and we look forward to the positive impact it will have for so many people in our state. Thank you.”

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**About NJAAW**

*NJ Advocates for Aging Well (NJAAW, [njaaw.org](http://njaaw.org)), formerly NJ Foundation for Aging, has been at the forefront of revolutionizing the aging experience since 1998. It is the only statewide nonprofit focused solely on providing leadership in public policy and education to enable older adults to live with independence and dignity in their communities. NJAAW’s social action issues include senior housing and hunger, elder economic security, older workers and transportation. The award-winning Aging Insights, a monthly topical TV program produced by NJAAW, connects caregivers, older adults and their families to community-based services and resources. The show is available on [NJAAW’s YouTube channel](#), [website](#) and more than 70 public-access stations across NJ (check local listings for channels and times). NJAAW also presents educational forums and an Annual Conference offering development opportunities and best practices for professionals entrusted with caring for aging adults.*