

the State's employment practices have been brought to my attention, and I have consulted with Mr. Russell Davis, our State Commissioner of Personnel, and others about them. It appears that during the past few years certain barriers to the hiring of older workers have been set up in State government. These barriers, I have concluded, serve the best interests of neither the State nor its citizens.

I am aware, also, that as more and more of our citizens are living longer lives, their years of productivity in relation to their life span is becoming shorter and shorter. This seriously affects the economic condition of our State, and its impact will be felt increasingly as the years go by. But entirely apart from the economic consideration is the human consideration that active and useful people, of whatever age, are happier and more vital citizens.

It is beyond dispute now that older workers, experienced and reliable, can learn new ideas readily, and if they are given the opportunity, they can continue to make valuable contributions to the general well-being of the State. These qualities are just as much needed in our society as are the qualities of energy and imagination in youth.

It is a matter of great encouragement and of great personal pride to me that you who represent the employers of the State, as well as you who have its general welfare at heart in the consideration of the humanity involved, have offered your time, your talent and your intelligence to a cause such as this—the betterment of our older citizens. It is a pleasure to me to observe that “Operation Joblift” has brought together representatives of the Maryland State Conference of Social Welfare, the Baltimore Association of Commerce, our Department of Employment Security, our new Commission on the Aging, the United States Department of Labor and the numerous professional and service organizations which we find listed in the program. With such magnificent array of diverse talent, I am sure that answers to many of our problems will be found. Such display of cooperative effort is in the very best tradition of this state which I have the honor to serve as Governor.

May I return now to a subject alluded to earlier.

I have studied carefully the recommendations made to me by the new Commission on Aging, and after consultations with State officials and others concerned, I am prepared today to make an announcement of a change in the employment policy of the State regarding older citizens. Under a new policy, age, as such, will be eliminated as a requirement for eligibility in all State positions with the exception of the Maryland State Police. I am directing the Commissioner of Personnel to alter his policies