



# JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

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Oregon State Legislature  
Senate Committee On Labor and Business

RE: Opposition to Oregon Senate Bill 916 (2025)

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, and Members of the Senate Committee On Labor and Business:

On behalf of Jackson County, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Oregon Senate Bill (SB) 916 (2025). Jackson County opposes the provisions of SB 916 for several reasons, the following only being three of those reasons.

First, SB 916 changes the entire purpose of unemployment compensation. Currently, unemployment benefits, generally, are for when a worker is unemployed due to no fault or choice of the worker. This provides funds and stability to a worker while the worker seeks new employment.

Second, SB 916 would have the effect of making workers who choose not to work, through engaging in a strike action, eligible for unemployment benefits. SB 916 will increase the costs of employing the residents of the State of Oregon. Unemployment insurance is funded through employer payments, and expanding the eligibility for benefits will increase the costs of providing those benefits.

Lastly, SB 916 will prolong and increase the frequency of strikes. One of the deciding factors employees must make in deciding to strike is the economic consequences of engaging in a strike, i.e. the loss of wages. A strike is economically devastating on employers and, as Jackson County is a public employer, would dramatically impact our most vulnerable residents. These economic consequences force both workers and employers to take strike actions as a last resort when collective bargaining negotiations fail. Allowing unemployment benefits during a strike removes those economic consequences for one side while leaving them in place for the other.

Jackson County thanks this Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony and for considering it.

Sincerely,

  
Joel C. Benton  
Senior Deputy County Administrator and County Counsel