

Hello, I am a nurse in the Providence system & I am under the Oregon Nurses Association Union. I support SB 916 which would repeal the law blocking unemployment benefits to workers on strike. This bill would help ensure that workers are able to stay afloat while fighting for a fair contract. It may incentivize employers to engage in meaningful negotiations in a more timely fashion.

I am one of about 5000 Oregon caregivers currently on strike to improve our working conditions. We are striking for fair wages/benefits. We are on strike for benefits that will keep experienced caregivers in our system and that is shown to improve patient outcomes! We are striking to promote a better work environment and patient conditions against an employer who seems to have little to no regard for its workforce or patients (customers)! The employer seems to feel they can just wait it out and we will eventually have to work on their subpar terms. My colleagues and I are striking to protect the community we serve and our licenses.

My bargaining unit has been working without a current contract for >400 days. The employer has not bargained in good faith to this point. We are striking to improve our workplace, our lives and our community. Some of us are single income households. We need to keep our living situations intact if possible. We are going without pay and taking out loans to try to weather this Strike. Unemployment insurance benefits would mean financial help with rent/mortgage & utilities. Some nurses will probably need COBRA insurance, that costs and we are on strike trying to negotiate without a source of income.

Ending this exclusion of UI benefits for strikes that go over 7 days will help make sure that workers like me can continue to pay our rent, feed our families, afford prescription drugs or pay our COBRA health care payments while out on strike. This will mean that we aren't forced into an unsafe or unfair contract just because the employer can starve us out. And those UI payments will work as intended: to also put money back into the local economy at times of economic distress.

Strikes are always a measure of absolute last resort. Please help ensure that workers like me – nurses, teachers, grocery and construction workers and so many more – are not forced into unsafe or unfair contracts simply because we can't afford to exercise our legally protected right to strike. Please vote yes on SB 916.