

Submitter: Jeff Grider
On Behalf Of: Union Members in Oregon
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

My name is Jeff Grider and I'm a Public Safety Officer and a member of the Portland Community College Federation of Classified Employees - PCCFCE - AFT Local 3922. 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.

Employers are reverting to more and more aggressive and harmful tactics to deny workers fair wages and benefits rather than participating in fair negotiations at the bargaining table.

Many strikes I have seen lately are in fact ULP strikes, which are due to an employer's illegal actions, and employers could be emboldened to continue this type of behavior if they know that eventually employees would be starved out.

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.