



February 6, 2025

Senate Committee on Labor and Business, HR B
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Senate Bill 916
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce Written Testimony Opposing SB 916

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

The Salem Chamber supports a healthy business climate, including fair labor practices, which incentivize employees and employers to partner together for economic growth. Senate Bill 916 proposes to repeal the statute that denies unemployment benefits to people involved in an active labor dispute. This weakens the founding principle of unemployment insurance (“UI”) which is to provide Oregon employees with financial assistance when they lose their job through no fault of their own.

Senate Bill 916 would force small businesses to carry the burden of higher payroll taxes to subsidize workers who choose to go on strike. This will likely lead to reduced job opportunities as small businesses face ever increasing operating costs. When taxes are increased, capital investment, business expansion, and hiring decrease.

Oregonians are already having issues communicating with the Oregon Employment Department to obtain their UI benefits, and this bill will expand the number of eligible UI applicants creating additional case management backlog. Furthermore, expanding the eligibility requirements will place additional strain upon the unemployment insurance trust fund.

Due to the increased cost to both small businesses and the state UI program, we urge reconsideration of this bill concept and opposition to SB 916 bill as proposed. Please provide consistency and stability for small businesses by keeping the present UI program in place.

Sincerely,

Tom Hoffert, CEO
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

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VIP's Industries Inc.

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Chief Executive Officer

Tom Hoffert
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce