

Submitter: Michael Selvaggio
On Behalf Of: Ridgelark Strategies LLC
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

Members of the committee:

My name is Michael Selvaggio, and although I am engaged as a lobbyist for UFCW 555, I am voluntarily submitting this specific piece of testimony on my own behalf as a businessowner and occasional employer.

In the past I have managed projects involving the hiring and management of anywhere from several to several hundred employees, and I am versed in the difficulties of directly managing that workforce. That being said, I wholeheartedly support Senate Bill 916, and for a simple reason: fairness.

We all largely acknowledge the ability of entrepreneurs and investors to pool and coordinate their resources in order to maximize their economic objectives. Likewise, in a free and fair society we must also recognize the ability of workers to do the same: coordinate and collectivize their labor in order to negotiate gains in terms of wages or working conditions.

The disconnect, however, is that as a businessowner there are many functions and mechanisms that, separate from simply preserving my right to capitalize my resources, are set up specifically to financially incentivize it and mitigate my risks in doing so, whether directly or passively. These mechanisms and policies include things like tax-advantaged capital investments, SBA loans, the paycheck protection program loans as well as PPP loan forgiveness, hardship accommodations, and myriad other incentives and protections, to say nothing of the omnipresent assurance of a financial sector bailout.

However, the risks of collectivizing and capitalizing labor resources have gone traditionally unmitigated. Employees engaged in a labor action are, functionally, on their own and are at best mutually supported by a strike fund generated from their own pockets.

This presents a staggeringly unlevel playing field when labor disagreements occur, with employers able to avail themselves of publicly supported risk-mitigating tools, and with workers subsisting on their own steam.

Passing SB 916 will provide a small and rarely-utilized concession whereby workers no longer have to so direly risk their homes or their children's meals simply because they exercised their rights to capitalize their labor resources.

Please vote YES on SB 916