

Submitter: Vivian LaMere
On Behalf Of: ONA member
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

As a nurse I strongly support having unemployment benefits available to workers engaged in a labor dispute.

The decision to go on strike is never an easy decision. In my instance, when healthcare workers engage in labor disputes it is often in response to unfair labor practices, inadequate resources, instances of unsafe staffing, and compromises to the quality of care of our patients and the community.

Denying unemployment benefits to workers engaged in a labor dispute equates to punishing those who are not only fighting for themselves but also the community at large.

Workers engaged in a labor dispute without income or financial support may find it impossible to be able to strike and advocate for change in the workplace. This gives the employer a very unfair advantage.

The ability of workers to engage in standing up for themselves and the community through collective action should not be their financial ruin. It should not be a choice of engaging in a legally protected collective action for better working conditions, safety, fair wages, etc. OR being able to keep a roof over ones head and food on the table.

I strongly urge you to support this bill for all workers engaged in a strike or labor dispute. I believe it somewhat levels the playing field and potentially helps to shorten the duration of such disputes as that piece of the unfair employer advantage is lessened.