

Submitter: Michelle Gregory
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

My name is Michelle Gregory and I'm a member of AFSCME Local 328 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.

A strike is a last resort for union workers to take. It is only used when all other methods of negotiation and mediation fail. A strike is not taken lightly and is scary for all members. It truly is the only option available for workers when the employer refuses to equitably negotiate a fair contract for both the employer and workers.

Ending this exclusion of UI benefits for strikes that go over 7 days will help make sure that workers like can continue to pay 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.

Again, strikes are always a measure of an 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.