

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

My name is Tilli Schilperoort and I'm a registered nurse at Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital and a member of Oregon Nurses Associate 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.

I and thousands of other nurse's and hospitalists have been on strike to support a fair contract that would include safer staffing, cost of living wage increases, equal pay compared to other healthcare facilities, to encourage retention of experienced nurses and better healthcare benefits.

Being on strike and unpaid for over a month has significantly impacted my family, I want to hold out for a fair contract, but may have to return just because of financially concerns, which makes me feel like my employer, who has financial stability, has the upper hand and is just waiting to starve out the workers who are on strike.

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.