

**Jonathan Eyestone**

RE: Testimony in Opposition to SB 916

**To the Senate Committee on Labor and Business:**

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 916. Oregon's unemployment insurance system is designed to support workers who lose their jobs involuntarily—not those who choose to walk off the job.

Expanding benefits to striking workers would place an unnecessary burden on employers, strain the state's unemployment fund, and make Oregon less attractive for business investment.

New York and New Jersey allow unemployment benefits for striking workers—coincidentally, the only two states ranked worse than Oregon in the 2024 *America's Top States for Business* report. Oregon already has the third-highest employer-paid unemployment tax in the nation. Forcing businesses to shoulder the cost of strikes would drive expenses even higher, ultimately harming both workers and job creators.

Additionally, state agencies must reimburse unemployment benefits on a dollar-for-dollar basis, reducing the buying power of taxpayer dollars that should be allocated to essential public services.

Strikes are already supported by multimillion-dollar hardship funds and 0% interest loans. If unemployment benefits were added on top, striking workers would have little incentive to negotiate in good faith. The result would be prolonged strikes, rejection of fair contracts, or even the collapse of businesses that cannot afford excessive demands—simply because striking workers would face no consequences for holding out on unreasonable terms.

I urge you to oppose SB 916 and protect Oregon's workers, businesses, and economic future. Please vote NO.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. I appreciate your time and consideration.