

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

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 916, which would end the exclusion of Unemployment Insurance benefits for workers when they are on strike.

Going on strike isn't an employee's first choice. The burden of lost wages make things even more difficult; further creating hardships when they're trying to negotiate for more fair working conditions and wages that keep pace with inflation. I stand by those who make Tue difficult decision to strike and implore others to do the same.

Strikes don't happen overnight. They are the result of long, difficult negotiations, and they are always the last resort. Many workers remain on the job under expired contracts for years, choosing to keep workplaces running rather than striking. But when an employer refuses to negotiate fairly, a strike becomes necessary.

Right now, employers can strip healthcare benefits away from striking workers. That is an enormous burden on working families. SB 916 is a small but vital protection that would ensure striking workers can still put food on the table and afford basic expenses.

This policy has minimal costs and will not place a significant burden on the unemployment insurance system. Instead, it will lead to shorter, fairer strikes by ensuring employers can't simply wait workers out.

Oregon must pass SB 916 and make the bargaining process more balanced.