

Submitter: Karyna McDonnell  
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.

I recently spent 46 days on strike as part of an Unfair Labor Practice strike against Providence. They refused to bargain in good faith, despite requests from our Governor and other political leaders. We should not lose our pay for standing up for ourselves. I've been a nurse for 25 years and gladly pay my taxes to be used for unemployment. These mega corporations should not be able to use loss of wages to lure workers into signing a subpar contract so they don't lose their health insurance and homes. I support any striking workers and support them getting unemployment to continue to do so for fair wages, better working environments and affordable healthcare.

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.