

Date:	March 4th, 2025
To:	Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham, and Members of the Senate Labor and Business Committee
From:	Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager, Justin Low
Subject:	Oppose – SB 916

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning in opposition of SB 916. For the record, my name is Justin Low, and I am offering testimony on behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). AOC is a non-partisan member organization that advocates on issues that unite all county governing bodies and have an impact on county functions, governance, budgets, and services.

AOC's membership knows a fair amount of work has been done on the bill since it was first introduced and appreciates the changes offered in the amendments that reduce some of local governments' concerns. However, there are still significant concerns that were raised by counties as they were asked to assess the fiscal impacts of this legislation:

- In a survey of counties we found that large population counties could experience costs between \$850,000 to \$1 million per week to pay back OED for benefits disbursed to striking workers.
 - For medium population counties, that cost was \$110,000 to \$330,000.
 - Lastly, for small population counties it was \$10,000 to \$20,000 per week if they had unionized employees.
 - These are costs that counties would pay back dollar-for-dollar.
- Of additional concern, on top of repaying the state UI fund for striking workers, is the need for counties to hire replacement workers to continue critical public services to constituents while bargaining units are out on strike.
 - This will essentially have counties using taxpayer dollars to pay twice as much for the same level of county services provided (once for striking employees via UI benefits and a second time for replacement workers' wages).
- Lastly, some counties will likely increase how much they budget for staff by tacking on extra dollars per FTE that go to a UI repayment fund to be tapped into in future years when CBAs are up for expiration. This will allow counties to have

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funds available for future strikes, but it will come at the expense of essential services that will need to be trimmed down to accommodate this new obligation.

In conclusion, AOC kindly asks the committee to consider the financial and operational ramifications of this legislation on county and local governments as you deliberate on the bill and its amendments, and to appreciate the critical differences between public employers and private employers' capacities to accommodate these changes in UI law when it comes time to vote on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Justin Low
Legislative Affairs Manager for Governance and Revenue