

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

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Michael Beranbaum and I represent Teamsters Local 670 organization

We strongly encourage your support of 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.

Lawmakers in 13 states have previously introduced or are actively considering such policies, including in Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington. It is estimated that extending employment insurance to strikers would cost less than 1% of total UI expenditures in each state that has considered such legislation, according to the report's estimates. Making strikers eligible for UI would mitigate some of the immediate economic risk to workers and their families, and encourage fair negotiations at the bargaining table since employers can't rely on threats to starve workers out by forcing a strike. And these policies don't only impact striking workers, they also help stabilize the economy by keeping dollars flowing to communities where a strike is taking place.

Not all employers follow the rules and bargain in good faith. Since coming to Teamsters Local 670 in January of 2017 I have only had one strike, at Hood River Distillers. this Company violated federal law, the employees had no choice but to go on strike, and after the NLRB found the employers actions tantamount to a lockout the State finally granted UI coverage but only after a long period of time, hearings and appeals.

the Economic Policy Institute recently released a study <https://www.epi.org/publication/ui-striking-workers/>, which concluded:

* EPI estimates that the cost of extending employment insurance to strikers would represent between 0.04% to 0.96% of a given state's total UI expenditures—an almost negligible share.

* These policies don't only impact striking workers; they also help stabilize the economy by keeping dollars flowing to communities where a strike is taking place.

* While opponents have raised concerns that such policies will encourage more

strikes, providing UI protections to striking workers may actually lead to fewer strikes.

I encourage the committee to stand with the hard working citizens of the State of Oregon and pass this legislation out of committee.