

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

My name is Twila Jacobsen and I am a Retiree and Statewide President of SEIU503 Retiree local 001. I support 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.

Over my lifetime the power balance has shifted drastically from a balanced approach to heavily favoring managers and corporations over workers. The loss of wages is acute when compared to inflation, with no improvement for years, while executive salaries have skyrocketed. Benefits have been lagging, and there are very few workers with pensions. This leads to the need for workers to stand in solidarity and strike.

Ending this exclusion of UI benefits for strikes that go over 7 days will help make sure that workers can continue to pay stay afloat, paying rent, feed families, afford prescription drugs or pay COBRA health care payments while out on strike. This will mean that workers aren't forced into an unsafe or unfair contract just because the employer can starve them out. And those UI payments will work as intended: to also put money back into the local economy at times of economic distress.

Strikes are always a measure of absolute last resort. Please help ensure that workers – nurses, teachers, public service workers, grocery and construction workers and so many more – are not forced into unsafe or unfair contracts simply because we can't afford to exercise our legally protected right to strike. Please vote yes on SB 916.