

Submitter: Chun-Yi Chen  
On Behalf Of: ONA  
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

My name is \_\_Chun-Yi\_\_ and I'm an\_\_\_\_ICU nurse\_\_\_\_ and a member of \_\_ONA\_\_\_\_ union. 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.

We are still on strike right now with Providence. I have been with this hospital for 12 years. All along, our pay have been the lowest amongst Portland area hospitals (such as OHSU, Legacy, and Kaiser). We are having issues of retaining.m new staff due to not having competitive pay and benefits. Although starting from last June, it is required by law to give us our lunches and breaks. Providence is not willing to give us break nurse to cover us for our breaks, they would rather pay the break penalty ( in our current tentative agreement). We do not need that one additional hour of pay, we need our proper breaks and lunch. We need our breaks to properly do this stressful job and take proper care of our patients. We need competitive pay so we can retain staffs. We also have the issue of now being switch to a costly health insurance. I have heard people having issues of having to pay much higher out-of-pocket money to cover their prescription or care which they dont have to before. I am now even scared of having to seek care with this new health insurance. Have an affordable health insurance should be the basic human right.

Before we start our strike, the health insurance issue keeps coming up for people. Although we have worked overtime try to save up some money for basic expense, we cannot live without health insurance in this country. We are on our fourth week of strike, a good number of us wanted to vote a NO on the tentative agreement because we deserve our breaks, affordable health insurance, and safe staffing. Yet, not all of us on the picket line can afford more days without working. Hence, we might have bow down to the big corporation even though we really do not want to.

Now, if there is an unemployment insurance benefits, it would meant we can stand up and fight against the profit driven corporation. We can then protect our patients with proper staffing, getting the breaks we deserve, able to retain staffs, and fight for affordable health insurance.

Ending this exclusion of UI benefits for strikes that go over 7 days will help make sure that workers like me can continue to pay our rent, feed our families, afford prescription drugs or pay our COBRA health care payments while out on strike. This will mean that we aren't forced into an unsafe or unfair contract just because the employer can starve us 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 like me – nurses, teachers, 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.