

February 6, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Labor and Business
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
Submitted electronically via OLIS

RE: SB 916, Relating to unemployment insurance benefits for employees unemployed due to a labor dispute; declaring an emergency

Chair Taylor and Members of the Committee:

The Hospital Association of Oregon is a mission-driven nonprofit association representing Oregon's 61 community hospitals. HAO provides services to Oregon's community hospitals to support their work delivering dependable, comprehensive health care to their communities.

The hospital association is opposed to SB 916, which would make unemployment insurance benefits available to striking workers.

Collective bargaining is a negotiation process, and strikes are a way for workers to gain leverage in these negotiations. This bill is irreconcilable with the very purpose of unemployment insurance—to be a resource for people who find themselves out of work through no fault of their own. That is a core principle that has existed under both federal and state law for decades. With workers financially supported through unemployment insurance benefits while on strike, there is less urgency to sit at the bargaining table and do the hard work. This will lead to longer strikes and make strikes a more frequent tool of negotiation.

In the case of hospitals, our members must stay open and staffed, even during a strike.

Strained by mounting costs and a morass of regulations, the health care system is at a breaking point. Allowing striking workers to receive unemployment insurance benefits increases the financial strain on hospitals that are already on the brink, putting access to care at risk.



For these reasons, we oppose SB 916.

Sincerely,



Sean Kolmer
Executive Vice President, External Affairs
Hospital Association of Oregon

About the Hospital Association of Oregon

Founded in 1934, the Hospital Association of Oregon (HAO) is a mission-driven, nonprofit trade association representing Oregon's 61 hospitals. Together, hospitals are the sixth largest private employer statewide, employing more than 70,000 employees. Committed to fostering a stronger, safer, more equitable Oregon where all people have access to the high-quality care they need, the hospital association supports Oregon's hospitals so they can support their communities; educates government officials and the public on the state's health landscape, and works collaboratively with policymakers, community based organizations and the health care community to build consensus on and advance health care policy benefiting the state's four million residents.



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