

Thursday, February 6, 2025

Honorable Committee Members,

I have been a Registered Nurse in Oregon since 2000, and have worked shifts at over 20 hospitals across the state. Today I am writing to express my strong support for SB 916 on behalf all of the nurses currently on day 28 of the largest healthcare workers strike in Oregon history. We are advocating for safer working conditions, fair wages, and improving patient care. This legislation is a critical step toward addressing the systemic issues that have pushed healthcare professionals to the brink, and I urge you to support its passage.

Nurses are the backbone of our healthcare system, working tirelessly to ensure the well-being of patients even in the most challenging circumstances. However, chronic understaffing, unsustainable workloads, and inadequate compensation have created an environment where nurses are forced to choose between their own health and the care they provide to others. The current strike is not just a call for better working conditions—it is a plea for the resources and support necessary to deliver the high-quality care that every patient deserves.

SB 916 addresses these urgent concerns by making the negotiations extremely more equitable by balancing the power dynamics. Providence is a multibillion dollar corporation with massive resources giving them the ability to delay negotiations, and forcing the striking nurses to incur debt, resign to find other employment, or cross the strike line, which further erodes the bargaining power of the union. SB 916 would allow workers to utilize unemployment, which would mitigate the overwhelming leverage that Providence has. These measures are not only essential for the well-being of nurses but also for the safety and health of the communities they serve. Studies have consistently shown that improved staffing levels and better working conditions lead to better patient outcomes, reduced medical errors, and lower mortality rates.

By supporting SB 916, you are standing with nurses in their fight for dignity, fairness, and the ability to provide the care they were trained to deliver. You are also sending a powerful message to the corporate healthcare systems, that Oregon values the lives of both patients and the professionals who care for them.

I urge you to listen to the voices of thousands of nurses on currently on strike, and the other thousands of union members around the state, who are also unfairly leveraged against giant corporations, and the billions of dollars they possess. Please take decisive action to pass SB 916 expeditiously. Our fight is your fight, and our victory will be a victory for all patients in the state.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I look forward to your support for SB 916 and your commitment to building a healthcare system in Oregon that has adequate staff in every facility.

Sincerely,

James Colburn RN, RCES
Providence St Vincent Medical Center