

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

Dear Senator Hayden,

As a previous union employee I understand the risk of working for a company that may find itself in a strike situation. I have been on strike. This bill is yet another example of "sharing a burden" that has no reason to be shared. It takes the consequence away from the employee who chooses (as part of his union) to go on strike against his company, thus encouraging more strikes, influencing negotiations, and potentially extending the strike. Small businesses should not have to bear yet another burden of tax not responsible to them, especially, as our state has been adding to their tax burden considerably over the past couple of years.

As a small business owner and NFIB member, my taxes could be increased if SB 916 passes – even if I have nothing at all to do with a strike.

According to the Oregon Employment Department, "Unemployment insurance provides money to people who have lost their jobs or have had their hours reduced through no fault of their own. Weekly payments of unemployment insurance benefits support people as they actively look for work."

Allowing UI benefits for workers who voluntarily leave their jobs to go on strike would not only add cost to the system, but it would also tip the balance in favor of unions during contract negotiations.

Unions would no longer need to collect strike-fund contributions from members, which has been common practice for decades. Instead, SB 916 would unfairly shift this obligation to employers like me. Basically, employers would be subsidizing union work stoppages – paying workers to go on strike against them.

In Oregon, employers pay 100% of unemployment taxes. Public employers, including cities, counties and school districts, typically reimburse the state for benefits paid to former employees – dollar for dollar. The increased costs of providing unemployment benefits for workers on strike would be spread among all employers and local taxpayers.

Please oppose SB 916 and urge your colleagues on the Senate Committee on Labor and Business to vote NO on this bill.