

Submitter: Julie Hedford MSN
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

RE: Support for SB 916

To the Senate Committee On Labor and Business,

When workers go on strike, they make immense sacrifices, affecting not only themselves but also their families. This courageous act is driven by a commitment to a greater good. It's unacceptable that such selflessness often leads to financial hardship. Our system should support and protect workers who take a stand against intolerable working conditions.

Healthcare workers, in particular, engage in strike actions not just for their own rights but also for the well-being of the patients and communities they serve. They fight for a sustainable Oregon healthcare system that benefits everyone. By building strong contract campaigns and, when necessary, going on strike, healthcare workers prioritize the needs of those who rely on them.

As a striking worker, I'm not just fighting for fair wages and better working conditions; I'm also struggling to make ends meet. With a significant reduction in income, I'm finding it challenging to pay my bills, including my mortgage and healthcare premiums. Unemployment benefits would be a lifeline for me and my family, helping us stay afloat during this difficult time. Knowing that we have a safety net would allow me to focus on the strike and advocate for the changes we need without the added stress of financial uncertainty.

Having the security of unemployment benefits would completely change the dynamics of our bargaining process. Knowing that striking workers are eligible for support would give us the confidence to stand strong and advocate for our rights without fear of financial devastation. Our bargaining unit would feel more united and empowered, knowing that we're not alone in this fight. With the knowledge that we have a safety net, we could focus on negotiating a fair contract that benefits everyone, rather than feeling pressured to accept subpar offers just to get back to work. It would be a game-changer for us and would allow us to bargain from a position of strength rather than desperation.

Thank you for accepting my testimony and I look forward to your support.
Julie Hedford MSN RN, IBCLC