

Submitter: Laura Varan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

As a nurse, fighting for safe staffing and advocating for well-being of patients is one of my priorities. Being on strike was not a decision taken lightly and standing up for safe working conditions should not come with penalty and financial loss. If unemployment benefits to workers on strike are being denied, we are intentionally punishing individuals who are fighting for better working conditions. By not allowing unemployment benefits, workers are being discouraged from using their legal right to collective action, creating an advantage for employers. Many healthcare workers are forced into an indefinite labor dispute without financial support, making it almost impossible to stand up for necessary changes that need to happen in the workplace; Labor disputes do not affect only employees, but entire communities. Allowing unemployment benefits in these circumstances ultimately protects patients by ensuring that nurses can fight for the resources they need to provide safe and effective care. I urge to support this bill to ensure that workers, including nurses like myself are not placed in an impossible position when advocating for improved working conditions.