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On Behalf Of: self  
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Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

Striking care workers should be eligible for unemployment. Though none of my coworkers want to strike, we have been abused by our employer Providence Health System for years. Our caring and hardworking nature has been taken advantage of by this huge corporate conglomerate. Our patients and nurses are suffering at the hands of Providence greed. Our employers will not listen unless extreme measures are taken. I work at Providence Milwaukie Hospital and we are strong in holding the line for however long it takes, it is a sacrifice 86% of Providence Milwaukie Nurses are proud to endure to give our patients the care they deserve. Even now, day 28 of the strike, we have been presented with an insulting Tentative Agreement, and today we are voting no! We are asking our union bargaining members and Providence to go back to the bargaining table to give us a contract which reflects the safe staffing conditions our patients require. We do not know how long it will take, but given how Providence Milwaukie has had well over a year to present the nurses with a contract we can accept, we believe we are in for the long haul. Our contract expired May 31st 2024, over 250 days ago, and negotiations for our contract should have been completed well before that date.

Unemployment is necessary for striking workers so they can hold the picket line and support each other during these difficult times. Picket lines are open from 0700-1700 daily and we are needed to be there to hold the line strong. Our union bargaining members are our coworkers, selfless floor nurses who are not compensated for the hours of work they do on behalf of their coworkers. Since Oregon Governor Tina Kotek ordered the Oregon Nurses Association and Providence back to the bargaining table, our bargaining team has been at the bargaining table from up to 8am to 2 am the following day, and they are working at least 14 hours a day, and then coming to the picket lines to support the nurses on the picket lines. It is cold and raining and snowing out on those lines but we are standing strong.

Everyone's situation is different, but I am unable to find more permanent or consistent work for various reasons. Though I do not claim my nephew or mom as dependents, I help out a lot with both of them. My nephew is autistic and I help care for him, including getting him some food and providing transportation for some of his appointments. He has many appointments due to his high needs related to autism and other sensory issues. I help my mom by buying some of her food and taking her to her medical appointments, and paying for her electricity and water bills. Currently, we have had many appointments for her ENT specialist and for her vocational rehab needs, which is part of the reason I have not sought more permanent or consistent work during this strike. I am out on the picket line showing support for this movement.

Oregon is built on the backs of people who are exploited everyday, so sometimes it is necessary to take extreme measures to strike! These striking workers need to be supported by unemployment benefits during these difficult and tumultuous times.