

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

My name is Lyndsey Johannesen and I'm a RN and a member of ONA union. I support SB 916 which would repeal the law blocking unemployment benefits to workers on strike. This bill would help ensure that workers are able to stay afloat while fighting for a fair contract.

I am a current nurse at Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center. I have worked at this lovely community hospital for over 16 years. I have watched our hospital go from a small community hospital to a cooperate run hospital. I have seen the changes Providence has implemented at my hospital over the years, and although some good has come from the acquisition, for us workers, the changes have mostly been negative. We are currently on strike to ask for competitive wages to retain staff, adequate health benefits, our retro pay for the over year our contract has been expired and safe staffing ratios to be written into our contract. Providence is a multi BILLION dollar company and they have told us these basic asks are unsustainable and therefore they can't give them to us.

We have been on strike for just over a month now and it's defiantly getting difficult to pay bills and basic living expenses while we try to fight for basic needs from our employer. This bill would help ensure that workers don't have to go into collections, risk losing their homes and lose their health insurance while trying to fight for a fair contract.

Ending this exclusion of UI benefits for strikes that go over 7 days will help make sure that workers like me can continue to pay our rent, feed our families, afford prescription drugs or pay our COBRA health care payments while out on strike. This will mean that we aren't forced into an unsafe or unfair contract just because the employer can starve us out. And those UI payments will work as intended: to also put money back into the local economy at times of economic distress.

Strikes are always a measure of absolute last resort. Please help ensure that workers like me – nurses, teachers, grocery and construction workers and so many more – are not forced into unsafe or unfair contracts simply because we can't afford to exercise our legally protected right to strike. Please vote yes on SB 916.