

Submitter: Ernesto Dominguez

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

Hello esteemed members of the Senate Committee On Labor and Business,

My name is Ernesto Dominguez and I'm a Health Educator and a member of the AFSCME Local 88 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.

Workers go on strike for various reasons, including cuts to wages or benefits, unsafe working conditions, or unfair labor practices. The decision to strike is not taken lightly and usually involves a lengthy process, including negotiations, mediation, and a strike vote by union members.

Personally, I've seen how the fear of financial hardship can prevent workers from exercising their right to strike. The current law, which excludes striking workers from receiving unemployment benefits after 7 days, puts immense pressure on individuals and families who are already struggling. This can force workers to accept unfavorable contracts just to avoid financial ruin.

Extending unemployment insurance benefits to striking workers would provide a crucial safety net, allowing them to cover basic needs like rent, food, and healthcare while fighting for fair wages and working conditions. This would help level the playing field in labor negotiations and ensure that workers have a fair chance to advocate for their rights.

Strikes are a last resort, but they are a vital tool for workers to protect themselves and their families. Please support SB 916 to ensure that workers are not punished for exercising their right to strike.