

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

My name is Melody Murphey and I'm a Public Service Union Organizer at SEIU 503. I am also a member of CWA Local 7901. I am writing on my own behalf and my views and opinions do not represent official positions of SEIU 503 or CWA Local 7901.

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 only as a last resort and only to solve critical issues facing them and their communities. When workers choose to strike it is because management is refusing to give them the dignity and respect of living wages, quality health insurance, adequate workplace safety, or another vital part of a fair workplace.

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.