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

I support this measure because when workers strike, it creates a significant financial hardship for the worker. Corporations have deep pockets and are able to pull from what can seem to be a large number of sources and funds.

As a member of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) and a Registered Nurse (RN) currently on strike, I see first hand how many of my fellow coworkers struggle to hold the line, while watching a large corporation have access to what appears to be an endless supply of resources. Corporations in this strong financial position can and do “drag their feet” in order to play a waiting game until Union members run out of funds and are ultimately forced to “give up” and return to work.

Giving the opportunity for workers to obtain unemployment would be another resource that could sustain them financially, just enough to hold the line. Quite often, workers are not striking just to get a couple of extra dollars an hour. In the current ONA strike, nurses and providers are fighting many things, including but not limited to: patient safety, the stoppage of wage theft, contract alignment, as well as competitive wages and benefits so that new staff can recruited and retained.

ONA members, who take care of the sick, dying, and vulnerable, should not have to sell their things, including vehicles; turn off their cable/services; go to the food bank; take out loans; deplete all of their savings; and get on food stamps, SNAP, or any other public benefits just to be able to remain strike for the betterment of their communities. Especially while the corporations are just playing the waiting game until there is no other choice for the Union members but to cross the picket line or risk losing their houses or starve.

Corporations are at an unfair advantage just by the nature of their business. Especially since despite Oregon’s views of not having strike workers cross the picket line, some professions appear to be exempt. Unfortunately, strike workers are able to replace medical professionals as the State of Oregon just can’t have hospitals close due to a strike. It would become a major public safety issue. However, the corporations have little to no incentive to bargain, as they can just “replace” Union members while they conduct wage theft and wait for the Union members to run out of money and resources.

Not providing support to striking Union members ultimately just allows big corporations to a greater chance to win. In the case of the ONA ongoing strike, with

everything at stake, it would be the nurses, providers, patients, and community members that could lose.