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February 11, 2025

To: The Senate Committee on Labor and Business
From: Anthony K. Smith, National Federation of Independent Business
Re: NFIB Written Testimony in Opposition to SB 916

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of Oregon's small business members of the National Federation of Independent Business, I would like to express our strong opposition to SB 916, which would allow striking workers to receive unemployment benefits during a labor dispute.

NFIB is the Voice of Small Business. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan, member-driven organization that advocates on behalf of America's small and independent business owners – both in Washington, D.C. and in all 50 state capitals. NFIB represents thousands of small businesses across the state in every industry sector, many being the smallest of small businesses, with about 90% of our members in Oregon having fewer than 25 employees and 70% having fewer than 10 employees. Together, our members provide jobs for tens of thousands of Oregonians.

[According to the Oregon Employment Department](#), "Unemployment insurance provides money to people who have **lost their jobs** or have had their hours reduced **through no fault of their own**. Weekly payments of unemployment insurance benefits support people **as they actively look for work**." (emphasis added) Allowing UI benefits for workers who voluntarily leave their jobs to go on strike would not only add cost to the system, but it would also tip the balance in favor of unions during contract negotiations.

The current common practice is for unions to establish strike funds that are collected from the union's member contributions. SB 916 would unfairly shift this obligation to employers. Essentially, employers would be subsidizing union work stoppages and paying workers to go on strike.

In Oregon, employers pay 100% of unemployment taxes. Public employers, including cities, counties and school districts, typically reimburse the state for benefits paid to former employees – dollar for dollar. The increased costs of providing unemployment benefits for workers on strike would be spread among all employers and local taxpayers.

Consequently, a small business far removed from the labor dispute in question could still see their taxes increase as a result of this expansion of benefits.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anthony K. Smith'.

Anthony K. Smith
NFIB Oregon State Director