

Submitter: Tiffany Gross

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

To the Oregon Legislature:

My name is Tiffany Gross and I'm a Registered Nurse and a member of The ONA union. I am also a registered voter and resident of Oregon for 20 years. I am asking for your support on 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.

Today February 11th is day 40 of the strike. All our nurses want is to go back to work. But we are determined to get a fair contract which addresses: Patient safety, fair wages, adequate health coverage.

Meanwhile it is difficult to feed our families. We are personally on the verge of a financial crisis due to this strike. Having a safety net during these times such as access to unemployment benefits would help us greatly. How do you tell a child the electricity might get turned off, or we could be evicted?

Please vote to END this exclusion of UI benefits for strikes that go over 7 days to 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 bamboozled into an unsafe or unfair contract just because the employer can starve us out. Providence has threatened our livelihood and our health by suggesting we are not worthy of acceptable health coverage and fair wages.

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.