

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

RE: Support for SB 916

To the Senate Committee On Labor and Business,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 916/House Bill 3434, which would allow workers on strike to receive unemployment benefits after seven days. As a worker who has been on strike, I can personally speak to the tremendous sacrifices that come with walking away from our jobs to fight for better working conditions, better pay, or the resources needed to serve our patients effectively. Striking is not a decision we make lightly. It comes from a place of deep frustration, commitment to our patients and communities, and the need for change that cannot be achieved without taking this bold step.

Going on strike is incredibly difficult, not just physically and emotionally, but financially as well. We are putting ourselves and our families in a precarious position, all while working to improve the workplace for everyone. It's an act of dedication to the cause of creating a better, more sustainable healthcare system. But the financial strain is real. We don't strike because we want to—it's a last resort when we've exhausted all other options.

Unemployment benefits for striking workers would ease some of that burden, allowing us to focus on the work we're doing to bring about positive change rather than worrying about how we'll make ends meet. It would help level the playing field in bargaining, too. If workers knew they could rely on some financial support during a strike, we would have the confidence and security to negotiate even harder for improvements that benefit not just us, but our patients and the healthcare system as a whole.

If my bargaining unit had known that unemployment benefits were an option, it would have made our fight feel more supported and less financially overwhelming. Having that safety net would allow workers to focus more on the greater good and less on the day-to-day survival concerns that come with the sacrifice of striking.

Please support this important legislation that will help protect the financial well-being of workers who are taking a stand for better conditions for everyone. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Oregon Nurse