

Submitter: Margo Burtchaell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

I support Senate Bill 916 because it will give striking workers a fair shot at bargaining for the wages and conditions they deserve.

The power differential between workers and corporations is too great. Workers standing up for their rights have so much to lose while corporations are able to wait out their employees. SB 916 lessens this differential ensuring that workers enacting their union rights can continue to fight for safer working conditions, fair wages, improved benefits and more.

A strike is never the first choice for workers. Before a strike happens, there have been extensive negotiations, often stretching across years. Workers do everything they can to avoid striking because they know it will mean financial hardship.

But when employers refuse to budge, workers are often forced into an impossible situation. Many companies even cut off healthcare benefits during a strike to pressure employees into accepting unfair deals. If employers have the right to take away healthcare, then workers should have the right to access unemployment benefits.

UI is not a handout—it's a partial wage replacement that helps workers avoid total financial collapse. SB 916 has an extremely low cost to the UI fund and a low impact on employers. What it does do is ensure fairer negotiations and prevent unnecessary suffering.

Oregon should pass SB 916 and stand with working people.