

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

I strongly support Senate Bill 916 because it will end the exclusion of Unemployment Insurance benefits for workers when they are on strike.

I drive by the striking workers at Bigfoot and they have been there for WEEKS. These companies just steamroll their employees and take away their hard earned pay, and these same employees are asking to be treated right. This is absurd. They are standing outside in freezing weather (they've been there since the summer so they were there in hot weather too - yes the heat in September). They NEED unemployment benefits. Tax Bigfoot to come up with the money.

Workers don't go on strike lightly. By the time a strike happens, employees have often spent weeks, months, or even years negotiating in good faith. Many continue working under expired contracts because they believe in their work and need to pay their bills. SB 916 is a simple, fair policy that will prevent striking workers from falling into financial crisis.

Employers have the power to strip healthcare benefits from striking workers, leaving them with impossible choices. UI is a partial wage replacement, not a full paycheck, but it will allow workers to stay in their homes, keep their lights on, and avoid financial ruin.

This policy has minimal costs to the UI system and to employers, but it would make a world of difference to working families. Passing SB 916 ensures workers can bargain fairly without being starved into accepting bad deals.

Oregon should stand up for working people by passing this bill.