

Submitter: Bob Rossi

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

I have been on strike many times, and before coming to Oregon in 1997 I lived in a region and did work where strikes were common and necessary. Employers used many ways of getting people back to work under disadvantageous conditions; if many of these were not actually illegal, most were unethical. And all were ultimately harmful to our well-being, safety, and pride in our work and in ourselves. We suffered, and our communities suffered.

Perhaps the most difficult struggles came when employers waited us out, starved us back, and hired replacement workers or depended on our coworkers who were having personal or family difficulties to cross the picketlines that they had once voted to support and participate in. That undermines worker's faith in themselves and their communities, it breaks the ties that bind people to civil society and creates long-lasting animosity that can remain for generations.

Part of the fix, or the way to avoid this, is to level the field just a bit and allow workers to collect unemployment benefits. No one should have to choose between their dignity, their rights, their friendships, their health, and their community or a paycheck, much less a paycheck that is earned by breaking bonds with our neighbors.