

Submitter: Scott Beaver

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

I urge lawmakers to pass Senate Bill 916 to support striking workers in Oregon.

I have not had the experience of striking, but my local has come close several times. Unemployment would not have made me whole, but it would have put food on the table and reduced the financial pressure to settle prematurely. For the state's part, paying unemployment benefits will provide some incentive for the employers to settle, bringing things into a fairly even balance rather than tipping the scales to employers.

Workers strike only after every other option has been exhausted. In many cases, they continue working under expired contracts for months or years, making sacrifices because they care about their jobs. SB 916 is a simple, fair measure to ensure that when workers must strike, they don't face total financial devastation.

Employers often use healthcare benefits as a weapon in labor disputes. Cutting off healthcare during a strike puts workers and their families in an impossible situation. Unemployment benefits are a reasonable safeguard that will prevent workers from falling into crisis while they stand up for fair wages and conditions.

This bill is low-cost, does not significantly impact employers, and would result in shorter strikes and fairer contracts. Oregon should pass SB 916 and support its workers.