



Oregon Law Center

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE FOR LOW INCOME OREGONIANS

Martha Sonato
Legislative Advocate
Oregon Law Center
msonato@oregonlawcenter.org

To: Senate Committee on Business and Labor
From: Martha Sonato, legislative advocate at the Oregon Law Center
Re: Support for SB 916
Date: March 4, 2025

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham, members of the committee,

Thank you for the chance to share testimony on behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC) in support of Senate Bill 916. OLC works to ensure fairness and justice for low-income Oregonians by providing free legal help.

SB 916 makes sure workers who go on strike aren't immediately pushed into financial hardship. The bill allows striking workers to receive unemployment benefits, giving them temporary financial support while they fight for fair pay, better working conditions, and important benefits.

Strikes are never the first choice—they happen when all other options to reach a fair deal have failed. But right now, too many workers must choose between standing up for their rights or paying their bills. SB 916 gives them a safety net so they can push for fair treatment without the fear of financial disaster, which is especially important for low-income workers who may not have savings to rely on.

Beyond helping individual workers, SB 916 makes Oregon's workforce stronger. When workers can negotiate better pay and conditions, jobs become more stable, fewer people quit, and workplaces improve. This benefits entire industries and communities. Even workers who aren't in unions see better pay and protections when others win improvements.

In the end, SB 916 is about fairness, financial security, and strengthening Oregon's workforce. We urge your support to help ensure all workers can stand up for their rights without putting their well-being at risk.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Martha Sonato
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The Oregon Law Center's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.