

From the Desk Of State Representative Boomer Wright

SB 916A Opposition

June 4, 2025

Speaker Fahey, Majority Leader Bowman, House Republican Leader Drazan, and Members of the Oregon House of Representatives:

As Oregon's county and city governments, we write to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 916 A. While we deeply respect the collective bargaining process and the rights of public employees, this bill would impose significant and unsustainable financial and administrative burdens on local governments across the state.

Under current law, local governments are required to reimburse the Oregon Employment Department dollar-for-dollar for unemployment insurance benefits paid to former employees. SB 916 A would extend these benefits to public employees engaged in a labor strike; a nationally unprecedented policy shift that would transfer the financial responsibility of a labor dispute directly to the taxpayer, whose dollars are meant to fund and support local government's abilities to deliver essential services to the public.

Counties and cities across Oregon are already navigating shrinking budgets, structural funding constraints, and growing demand for core services such as public safety, emergency management, housing, public health, and road maintenance; many of which are statutorily mandated services that will require hiring replacement workers while bargaining units are out on strike.

At a time when our communities are grappling with housing insecurity, behavioral health crises, and utility rate hikes, every dollar must be invested where it delivers direct and measurable benefit to the public. Should SB 916 A pass, midsize counties can expect to repay the state up to \$478,000 per week and midsize cities can expect to repay the state up to \$165,240 per week—all with taxpayer dollars.

We urge you to protect the sustainability of local government services and reject SB 916 A. Local governments need predictability and partnership, not new cost burdens that could jeopardize our ability to meet statutory obligations and the essential needs of the people we serve.

Sincerely,



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