

Oregon Nurse in Milwaukie
February 5, 2025
Testimony in Support of UI for Striking Workers

To the Senate Committee on Labor and Business:

I am an RN who works for the medical surgical unit at Providence Milwaukie Hospital, and have been on strike since January 10th. I am incredibly fortunate to have some financial stability through my spouse's income during this difficult time, but I am still financially burdened to cover all of my monthly expenses such as my school loans, my sons' school costs, mortgage and utilities. Having access to unemployment benefits while on an extended strike would prevent me from having to go into debt to pay my normal monthly expenses. Please pass this bill in order to support striking workers who are like me and those with less financial security, so we can continue to hold the line. Holding the line to secure a fair contract helps not only us workers, but the patients we care for. Ensuring safe staffing ratios will allow nurses more time to care for patients with higher care needs. Higher acuity patients that need multiple treatments and are medically unstable, need more frequent vital checks and interventions. For example, studies have shown that nurse staffing based on patient need levels allows for more frequent patient interventions, therefore reducing the risk of patients developing life threatening sepsis (Lasater, et al, 2020).

Furthermore, we as nurses cannot care for our patients if our own health needs are neglected. The recent changes to our health insurance from Providence to Aetna has been harmful, as Aetna has reportedly been denying important life saving treatments and medications. I personally have received a letter from Aetna saying that they will no longer cover my Albuterol medication, an oral inhaler which is standard and critical for opening up the airway for breathing.

We continue to strike now in order to address these changes to our health care, to address unsafe staffing and more, in order to meet our own needs as well as improve the care that we can give to our patients. I urge you to please pass this bill in order to address a critical need for workers on strike.

Thank you,
Oregon Nurse in Milwaukie