

Submitter: Tex Taylor

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

I am a basic member of a smaller independent union for a popular high-end Portland area grocery store (once local, now owned by a larger foreign company).

I have participated in strikes around getting a fair contract for better wages, better benefits and less punitive employer policies around sick time, as well as just cause with processes to eliminate unfair firings, which I have been a victim of in non-unionized jobs previously!

Because my union is independent, we struggle to have enough strike aid, which has massively undermined durations of strike and ability of those who wanted to participate to participate. I would say this has been our biggest struggle. In my experience, our strike aid does not cover our rate of pay or even the amount of days we've had to strike due to having so little funds.

UI benefits would enable my union to leverage the collective power that we know we have, and without these funds, our fight for a contract will just continue to be drawn out longer and longer. Most of us live paycheck to paycheck in the grocery industry, so these benefits would particularly help us! The longer we need to strike and cannot, we are forced to contend with member burnout and low morale around actually securing a contract we want and not one we are simply forced into taking.