

Submitter: Makayla Dean
On Behalf Of: Liuna Local 737
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

My name is Makayla Dean and I'm a Laborer Apprentice and a member of the Liuna Local 737 union. I support SB 916 which would repeal the law blocking unemployment benefits to workers on strike. This bill would help ensure that workers are able to stay afloat while fighting for a fair contract.

The companies I have worked for don't pay us wages while we are in Mandatory classes for a period of a week at a time.

I have had several weeks where I was not paid for my class hours and have struggled to pay my bills because of this issue. Without UI benefits would have made it that much more difficult.

Ending this exclusion of UI benefits for strikes that go over 7 days will help make sure that workers like me can continue to pay our rent, feed our families, afford prescription drugs or pay our COBRA health care payments while out on strike. This will mean that we aren't forced into an unsafe or unfair contract just because the employer can starve us out. And those UI payments will work as intended: to also put money back into the local economy at times of economic distress.

Strikes are always a measure of absolute last resort. Please help ensure that workers like me – nurses, teachers, grocery, and construction workers and so many more – are not forced into unsafe or unfair contracts simply because we can't afford to exercise our legally protected right to strike. Please vote yes on SB 916.