

Submitter: Annie McVay

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

I urge lawmakers to pass Senate Bill 916 to support striking workers in Oregon.

University of Oregon Administration always waits until the last minute when we bargain, however, with the looming cuts to the Federal Department of Education, I fear there will no longer be any last minute deals. Our Teamster siblings at Bigfoot Beverages have been striking for over 140 days. They really need support in the form of unemployment benefits. Please ensure that workers have the ability to not only stand up for fair wages, but for fair labor practices and respect from their employer.

Workers strike only after every other option has been exhausted. In many cases, they continue working under expired contracts for months or years, making sacrifices because they care about their jobs. SB 916 is a simple, fair measure to ensure that when workers must strike, they don't face total financial devastation.

Employers often use healthcare benefits as a weapon in labor disputes. Cutting off healthcare during a strike puts workers and their families in an impossible situation. Unemployment benefits are a reasonable safeguard that will prevent workers from falling into crisis while they stand up for fair wages and conditions.

This bill is low-cost, does not significantly impact employers, and would result in shorter strikes and fairer contracts. Oregon should pass SB 916 and support its workers.