

Submitter: Denice Searcy
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

VOTE NO ON SB 916

I STRONGLY OPPOSE SB 916. A voluntary act should not be compensated. Small business owner taxes could be increased if SB 916 passes – even if they aren't involve in a strike.

According to the Oregon Employment Department, “Unemployment insurance provides money to people who have lost their jobs or have had their hours reduced through no fault of their own. Weekly payments of unemployment insurance benefits support people as they actively look for work.”

Allowing UI benefits for workers who voluntarily leave their jobs to go on strike would not only add cost to the system, but it would also tip the balance in favor of unions during contract negotiations.

Unions would no longer need to collect strike-fund contributions from members, which has been common practice for decades. Instead, SB 916 would unfairly shift this obligation to employers subsidizing union work stoppages – paying workers to go on strike against them.

In Oregon, employers pay 100% of unemployment taxes. Public employers, including cities, counties and school districts, typically reimburse the state for benefits paid to former employees –dollar for dollar. The increased costs of providing unemployment benefits for workers on strike would be spread among all employers and local taxpayers.

There are many issues and unintended consequences from this legislation:

- This policy will encourage longer strike times.
- Employers will be paying for voluntary leave.
- This will affect government services.
- This strains an already expensive, delicate system.
- This bill will make things more expensive and less accessible to Oregonians.