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

I support Senate Bill 916 because it will give striking workers a fair shot at bargaining for the wages and conditions they deserve.

I have been on the bargaining team for many round of negotiations for my union. The prospect of a strike always looms at the far end — with the weight of knowing the sacrifices it would require of workers. While employers may gear themselves up to wait out a strike, the burden on individual striking workers is huge. SB 916 would help right-size that burden.

A strike is never the first choice for workers. Before a strike happens, there have been extensive negotiations, often stretching across years. Workers do everything they can to avoid striking because they know it will mean financial hardship.

But when employers refuse to budge, workers are often forced into an impossible situation. Many companies even cut off healthcare benefits during a strike to pressure employees into accepting unfair deals. If employers have the right to take away healthcare, then workers should have the right to access unemployment benefits.

UI is not a handout—it's a partial wage replacement that helps workers avoid total financial collapse. SB 916 has an extremely low cost to the UI fund and a low impact on employers. What it does do is ensure fairer negotiations and prevent unnecessary suffering.

Oregon should pass SB 916 and stand with working people.