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

Talking to the Providence ONA members on the picket lines in January and February this year, it was clear that - as the strike continued - many of them were in critical financial straits without a paycheck. At the same time Providence, with its large budget and reserves, was able to easily pay replacement workers at very high rates during the strike. SB 916 would be a step to help level the playing field between workers and employer during a strike.

I strongly support Senate Bill 916 because it will end the exclusion of Unemployment Insurance benefits for workers when they are on strike.

Workers don't go on strike lightly. By the time a strike happens, employees have often spent weeks, months, or even years negotiating in good faith. Many continue working under expired contracts because they believe in their work and need to pay their bills. SB 916 is a simple, fair policy that will prevent striking workers from falling into financial crisis.

Employers have the power to strip healthcare benefits from striking workers, leaving them with impossible choices. UI is a partial wage replacement, not a full paycheck, but it will allow workers to stay in their homes, keep their lights on, and avoid financial ruin.

This policy has minimal costs to the UI system and to employers, but it would make a world of difference to working families. Passing SB 916 ensures workers can bargain fairly without being starved into accepting bad deals.

Oregon should stand up for working people by passing this bill.