

Submitter: Mark Halliday
On Behalf Of: Con-Vey
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB916

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RE: Opposition to SB 916 – Unemployment Benefits for Workers on Strike
On behalf of Con-Vey, a mid-sized business employing 110 Oregonians in manufacturing, I write to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 916, which would allow employees to claim unemployment insurance (UI) benefits after voluntarily walking off the job to go on strike.

Unemployment insurance was created as a safety net for individuals who lose their jobs through no fault of their own—due to layoffs, business closures, or economic downturns. It was never intended to subsidize decisions to voluntarily leave employment, particularly in the context of labor disputes. SB 916 fundamentally shifts this principle and introduces significant financial and operational concerns for employers like us.

As a private employer, we already contribute to Oregon's UI Trust Fund through payroll taxes based on our claims history. Allowing workers who engage in strikes—voluntary work stoppages—to access UI benefits would unfairly burden employers with higher tax liabilities and potentially destabilize the fund. This could result in increased UI tax rates for all businesses, regardless of whether they were involved in labor disputes.

Moreover, SB 916 creates a moral hazard by reducing the financial risk to employees who choose to strike, which could prolong labor disputes and reduce the incentive for early, good-faith negotiations. For mid-sized businesses operating on tight margins, extended work stoppages—now subsidized by the state—could lead to production losses, contract breaches, and even job cuts or closures, undermining the very job security the bill seeks to protect.

Oregon's UI system should remain focused on protecting workers from involuntary job loss, not become a tool for subsidizing labor negotiations. We urge you to consider the broader economic consequences of SB 916 and stand with the employers, both large and small, who are committed to creating jobs, growing our local economy, and resolving labor issues responsibly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Mark Halliday
Financial Manager
Con-Vey, LLC