

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

SB-916 would dangerously subvert the purpose of unemployment insurance and I urge the legislature to vote against it. Unemployment insurance is supposed to support workers who lose their job through no fault of their own. This bill changes that formula and would incentivize union workers to strike, potentially costing the state, businesses and taxpayers millions of dollars and resulting in even more delays to public services and projects.

While the bill does specify that workers would be obligated to return any backpay they receive and deduct it from their full salary, the means of obtaining the funds are vague and don't guarantee timely recovery. Properly recovering the funds would likely require yet another complicated administrative process that would cost taxpayers even more money. You need to consider what putting this bill into practice would actually require and how much it would cost.

Unions already have funds to help their members weather strikes. This bill essentially entangles the State in union strike pay schemes, which is not where government belongs.

I fully support unions' ability to strike, but this is a step too far at a perilous moment for Oregon's financial future. Businesses and "high-earning" individuals are already leaving Oregon over our high taxes, tight regulations and poor school performance. This bill would only exacerbate these issues rather than improve them.

Rather than making it easier for union workers to strike, perhaps the Legislature should focus on addressing the root causes of our problems: reduce red-tape to make building things easier, encourage schools to spend less on unneeded administrative costs and more on students and teachers, provide incentives for businesses to come back to Oregon, and improve public safety so that people feel comfortable on the streets they pay for.

Thank you for your consideration!