

Chair Grayber, Vice-chairs Munoz and Elmer and members of the committee, for the record my name is Jenipher Wivell and I am a medical assistant at Kaiser Salem and a member of SEIU 49. I am here today in support of Senate Bill 916A.

There are so many points I would like to make in my allotted 2 mins of testimony today. I was a part of the 3 day 2023 strike with Kaiser. My mom was a part of the 6 wk strike in 1997.

Strike, that is a big scary word for so many union workers. Going on strike means fighting for what we believe in. It means we are stronger together, it means no pay check, it means no health care. That power of a strike is a double edged sword for a union worker. With our employers knowing that if we strike, we will not have any income coming in nor health care. They can essentially starve us out at the negotiation table.

Going on strike is not an easy decision and it comes at a financial hardship. Allowing striking workers to apply for unemployment will not change that. Unemployment is based on 1.25% of your yearly salary, if you are an Emergency Room Tech who makes \$22.83 per hour (that is an increase in their salary from a previous 3 day strike) you are barely going to make a house payment with the \$567 unemployment check you would get.

I would like to point out that not all unions have a strike fund. SEIU represents some of the lowest paid employees in health care. To be able to provide a strike fund we would have to have our members pay more in union dues. Knowing who we represent we can not in good conscience take more money from what little they already get.

SB 916A does not increase costs for businesses, it does not allow for more than 100% of pay, and it is not an unfunded mandate. This policy has a low impact on our UI trust and will shorten strikes in the long run.