



April 30, 2025

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and members of the committee,

My name is Ira Cuello-Martinez and I am the Policy Advocacy Director at PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. PCUN aims to empower farmworkers and working Latinx families to improve their working conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy.

On behalf of our members, I am providing testimony in strong support of SB 916 which would repeal the law blocking unemployment benefits to workers on strike. This bill would help ensure that workers are able to stay afloat while fighting for a fair contract.

We recognize that when workers anywhere take collective action to improve their working conditions, it benefits all working people. Denying unemployment benefits during labor disputes unfairly punishes workers for exercising their fundamental rights. It deepens inequality and weakens the collective power of working people, whether in the fields, factories, classrooms, or hospitals.

Establishing unemployment insurance for striking workers will increase stability across sectors due to impacts on retention, worker satisfaction, and workplace standards. Additionally, it will help workers and their families continue to afford necessities and spend money in their communities, sustaining support for the local economy and small businesses.

We believe this bill aligns with Oregon's values of fairness and equity. By providing unemployment insurance to workers during labor disputes, we uphold the right to organize free from undue economic coercion. We also affirm that Oregon stands against workplace practices that perpetuate poverty and exploitation.

We urge you to support SB 916 and extend unemployment benefits to striking workers.

Thank you.

Ira Cuello-Martinez
Policy and Advocacy Director
PCUN