

April 30, 2025

To: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards

From: Julie Shewchuk RN

Testimony in Support of SB 916 A

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Elmer and Muñoz and members of the Committee, my name is Julie Shewchuk and I am a registered nurse and member of the Oregon Nurses Association. I'm here today to testify in support of SB 916.

On January 10, 2025 I was one of the nearly 5000 Providence nurses and other healthcare workers go on strike for 46 days. In my 28 years at Providence, I never envisioned I would've been in the position to vote yes to authorizing a strike. It was not a decision we took lightly, including for the concerns of impact on the community, who we feel a calling to care for. Our negotiations began in September 2023. Over a year was plenty of time to at least have met in the middle, but we didn't feel heard, feel valued, or respected and felt we had no choice but to go on strike.

We wanted safe staffing language. We wanted the fair pay that can attract and recruit qualified staff and address burnout. We want to be able to care for our patients sustainably, and be cared for, ourselves.

Authorizing a strike was hard, but it comes from love of our jobs. You can only give so much until there's nothing left to give.

We were stressed about how this would impact us. We all have situations that mean we need economic support for hard times.

I am on a life-saving medication; I am on chemotherapy that I take daily that without insurance cost \$4000 a month. Providence, you will remember, made a decision to inform employees they would cut off our health insurance.

The costs and the fear would've been meaningfully lessened had the policy of SB 916 been in effect.

I thank you for the time today and, on behalf of nurses and healthcare workers, urge your support of this bill.

– Julie Shewchuk RN