



From the Offices of Representative Dacia Grayber, Senator Kathleen Taylor, Representative Travis Nelson, Representative Lesly Muñoz

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House Democrats Vote to Balance Bargaining Scales That Historically Disadvantage Workers

SALEM, Ore. – Today, House Democrats passed [SB916](#), allowing workers on strike to qualify for unemployment benefits after two weeks. The bill, introduced and co-championed by **State Representative Dacia Grayber (D - SW Portland)** and **Senator Kathleen Taylor (D - Milwaukie, Oak Grove, SE & NE Portland)**, seeks to balance the scales in labor negotiations by removing tactics by large employers to ‘wait out’ workers until their savings are depleted.

“This bill represents a potentially monumental win for workers. We are one step closer to preventing large employers from starving out their own workers in bargaining,” says **Representative Grayber**. “All of Oregon’s workers deserve fair and safe workplace conditions.”

“Going on strike is a last resort for workers, and is not something anyone wants to do,” says **Senator Taylor**. “SB 916 helps workers keep food on the table and a roof over their heads during those difficult times.”

The bill notably won’t raise costs for small businesses. A nonpartisan report to the legislature found that overall employment taxes were not anticipated to go up as a result of this policy - and any business without a unionized workforce won’t see any change. The average unemployment check in Oregon is about \$500 a week.

“I’ve sat at the bargaining table more times than I can count as an advocate for Nurses and healthcare workers,” adds **Representative Travis Nelson (D - North Portland)**. “SB 916 won’t encourage strikes – it will shorten them. It will bring employers to the table faster, and let workers stand up without having to worry that their families will starve should they choose to exercise their right to strike. Fundamentally, this legislation is about dignity and fairness for workers.”

“When workers decide to strike, it is not a decision taken lightly. It is the last option when the rent is overdue, the refrigerator is empty, and the promises at the bargaining table remain broken,” said **Rep. Lesly Muñoz (D-Woodburn)**. “SB 916B is grounded in fairness, dignity, and the basic idea that no worker should be pushed into a financial crisis for exercising their legal right to strike.”

SB 916 now proceeds to the Senate for a concurrence vote.

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