



OREGON SENATE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS PRESS RELEASE

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Senate Democrats Reward Political Allies, Voting to Force Small Businesses and Taxpayers to Fund Labor Strikes

SALEM, Ore. – Today, **Senate Democrats** passed [Senate Bill 916](#), and rejected a common-sense [minority report](#) that would have protected small businesses, schools, hospitals, and taxpayers from being forced to subsidize private labor disputes.

Under SB 916, striking workers, including public employees, will now be eligible to collect unemployment benefits, making Oregon the first state in the nation to take this extreme step. While only New York and New Jersey allow striking workers to receive unemployment benefits, no state has ever applied this policy to public employees until now.

“Unemployment benefits were never meant to bankroll labor strikes,” said **Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles)**. “This bill rewrites the rules to reward political allies at the direct expense of small businesses, healthcare facilities, and schools, many of which are already struggling with workforce shortages and rising costs. Democrats had the opportunity to support a balanced alternative that ensured fairness and financial responsibility, but instead, they pushed through a bill that prioritizes special interests over working Oregonians.”

The minority report, which Senate Republicans proposed, would have required a four-week waiting period before striking workers could receive benefits, ensured repayment of funds with interest, and required unions to maintain adequate strike funds before members could access taxpayer-supported benefits. It also reinforced long-standing Oregon law prohibiting public employees from striking, mirroring Taylor’s Law in New York.

Instead, Senate Democrats rejected these protections and voted to make Oregon an outlier in the country.

“This isn’t just bad policy, it’s unfair to every Oregonian who is expected to show up for work every day,” said **Senator Suzanne Weber (R-Tillamook)**. “A strike is a choice, not an unforeseen layoff or business closure. People who voluntarily walk off the job should not be entitled to the same benefits as those who lose their jobs through no fault of their own.”

Senate Republicans unanimously voted no on this costly measure. SB 916 now moves to the Oregon House of Representatives for further consideration.

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