

M.E.B.A. Endorses Obama

The M.E.B.A. is pleased to announce our endorsement of Senator Barack Obama as the next President of the United States of America.

Sen. Obama has voiced his strong support for U.S. maritime statutes and programs critical to our union and industry such as the Jones Act, Maritime Security Program and cargo preference laws. Among other things, Sen. Obama has stated that, “maintaining the American merchant marine fleet is vital to our economy and national security.” The Senator’s record and statements indicate that he is onboard with our view that we should do everything in our power to preserve and strengthen the U.S. Merchant Marine and the important maritime statutes that help keep our fleet afloat.

He has also been a strong proponent of unions with a 98% voting record on pro-labor issues, as ranked by the AFL-CIO. Sen. Obama supports Davis-Bacon wage protections, voted to increase the minimum wage and is a champion of the Employee Free Choice Act. He has said, “We need to strengthen our unions by letting them do what they do best—organize our workers. If a majority of workers want a union, they should get a union. And that is why I’ll fight for and why I intend to sign the Employee Free Choice Act when it lands on my desk in the White House.”

We believe that Sen. Obama is the candidate best equipped to tackle the many economic challenges facing our nation and will fight for the beneficial change that working men and women in this country deserve. Maritime is a bipartisan industry. The M.E.B.A. continues to support a great number of Republican lawmakers and has endorsed many Republican Presidents in the past. However in the 2008 Presidential election, the lines are clearly drawn and only one candidate has committed himself to work on behalf of labor and maritime.

M.E.B.A. President Don Keefe declared, “As a first year president, I understand firsthand what it takes to answer the call for change. I share Sen. Obama’s passion to deliver fresh ideas and realistic approaches to problems that affect the working families that carry this country on their backs. It is up to us as the new generation of leaders to protect our country and industry by committing to change. In that same spirit, I believe it is important that we work on behalf of the Obama campaign to help create a better future for the labor movement and maritime industry. I look forward to working with him and his Administration towards a bright future.”

The announcement came after a conference call this week of AFL-CIO leaders who voted, without opposition, to endorse Sen. Obama for president. AFL-CIO’s endorsement thrust the labor federation’s largest-ever grassroots mobilization effort into high gear.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said, “Barack Obama has proven from his days as an organizer, to his time in the Senate and his historic run for the presidency, that he’s leading the fight to turn around America. He’s a champion for working families who knows what it’s going to take to create an economy that works for everyone... We’re proud to stand with Sen. Obama to help our nation chart a course that will improve life for generations of working people and our children.”

“We’ll work our hearts out for Barack Obama,” said AFSCME President and AFL-CIO Political Committee Chair Gerald McEntee. “Our program is going to be worker to worker and neighbor to neighbor. We’re ready to mobilize. We’re ready to rock and roll. This country and our people are ready for change.”

The AFL-CIO also launched a new website that provides extensive information on Obama’s background, record and positions (www.MeetObama08.com).

United Steelworkers President Leo Gerard said, “Senator Obama’s plan to revitalize American manufacturing and his commitment to make workers the top priority in any trade agreement give our members hope that his election will lead the country in a new direction that’s long overdue, and inspire us to work as never before to secure his victory.”