

BARACK OBAMA

October 8, 2008

Don Keefe, President
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite # 800
Washington, DC 20001

Dear President Keefe:

It is an honor to have the endorsement of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association and your members. Working Americans like you at MEBA are the backbone of the American economy, and your commitment and effort this election cycle will help restore a sense of shared prosperity and security to our nation.

It's clear to me that America needs a strong and vibrant U.S.-Flag Merchant Marine, and that means investing in our maritime workers and infrastructure. It's vital for commerce and our national security – it's vital to the American way of life.

That is why you and your members can continue to count on me to support the Jones Act (which also includes the Passenger Vessel Services Act) and the continued exclusion of maritime services in international trade agreements. American Merchant Mariners always have answered the nation's call from the first days of the Revolutionary War to today. In peace and in war, our Mariners have stood with us and my Administration will stand with them.

To make sure our Armed Forces have the equipment and ammunition they need at the time the materiel are required, my Administration will solidly support the continuation of the Maritime Security Program. The MSP has proven itself since being enacted in 1996, making sure our troops deployed overseas have no worries about when their supplies will be delivered.

A strong U.S.-Flag commercial fleet needs our nation's Cargo Preference laws. Whether it is carrying needed goods to those overseas in distress or moving government-generated cargo, American Mariners aboard American ships make sure the job is done. People around the world look to the U.S. Flag as a symbol of hope and determination. Ships flying Old Glory with American crews are important icons of our resolve.

Those programs set a firm foundation for America's Merchant Mariners by providing opportunities for decent wages, good benefits and fair treatment. Certainly, a strong union movement has been and will continue to be a major contributor to the achievement of this essential national goal.

I am proud to stand with and for you and your members. Your endorsement and support have made a powerful statement about what we can do together to create the changes our country needs.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama

