

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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MARAD SIMULATED SHIP BREAKOUT TUESDAY; MEMBER PARTICIPATION IS CRUCIAL

Qualified members, applicants and retirees are being summoned for a massive simulated vessel breakout that begins on Tuesday, February 26th, to test whether the country is ready for action if a real ship and mariner mobilization is required. The nine-day tabletop activation of the MarAd Ready Reserve Force fleet and Military Sealift Command Surge sealift vessels is an annual Command Post Exercise conducted at the direction of the U.S. Transportation Command.

This is a paper exercise and members participating won't actually report to the vessels but MarAd will be contacting many by email later to verify their readiness to crew the ships. ***Once the paper activation starts, agreeing to a virtual ship assignment will not preclude a mariner from subsequently taking a real-world shipping job.***

M.E.B.A. Deck and Engine officers in all positions will be needed for this exercise. Properly credentialed officers who are not currently working a job are needed to participate in this exercise that will take very little time.

The exercise runs until Wednesday, March 7th. The meat of the tabletop activation will occur in the first four days as mariners are linked up to virtual shipping jobs. The last five days of the exercise will largely involve quality assurance verification of ship manning lists.

It is important to check in with your hall, let them know you're available and make sure they have your cell number or best contact information. Member participation in this exercise should take no longer than 5 minutes on the phone. Expect a quick call from an M.E.B.A. official or Dispatcher sometime after the exercise begins on Tuesday. Deck and engineering officers are encouraged to call ahead to a hall and offer to add their names to the list. Among other things, the exercise helps confirm the availability, certifications and training of mariner manpower, helps assess the impact of a contested environment on mariner readiness and helps prepare affected agencies and personnel for a large-scale RRF activation scenario.

M.E.B.A. members have been through this many times before and have always come through – in virtual breakouts and for the real thing. Please help us ensure that the mariner workforce satisfies our obligations in Breakout 2019.

10 FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS OPPOSE PUERTO RICO APPLICATION FOR 10-YEAR JONES ACT WAIVER

Ten members of Congress from the Florida delegation have issued their opposition to a recent application by the Governor of Puerto Rico for a 10-year Jones Act waiver. Eight Republican Members, along with two Democrats, penned a letter to Homeland Security Department Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen claiming that a granted waiver would not only compromise the Jones Act itself, but also “would devastate Florida's domestic maritime and LNG industry.”

Puerto Rico is seeking the decade-long waiver to permit shipment of U.S. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to the island aboard foreign-flagged LNG carriers. The initiative is said to be part of Puerto Rico’s push to convert most of its power generators from diesel fuel to natural gas.

Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello Nevaes said there are no Jones Act eligible LNG carriers among 478 such vessels worldwide. The waiver is conditional upon the continued non-availability of Jones Act LNG carriers and would expire if one becomes available. The Governor noted that without a waiver, the island would be unable to purchase American natural gas and instead would rely on foreign sources.

Besides expressing opposition on grounds that the waiver would negatively affect Florida’s maritime industry, the House Members asserted that it would also “compromise our nation's ability to respond in time of natural disaster or military contingency because the waiver would undermine the very foundation of the law itself.” The lawmakers also are not convinced that a waiver would end up providing a benefit to Puerto Rico.

Florida Members signing the letter included Reps. Matt Gaetz (R-1), Ted Yoho (R-3), John Rutherford (R-4), Al Lawson (D-5), Michael Waltz (R-6), Daniel Webster (R-11), Charlie Crist (D-13), Ross Spano (R-15), Brian Mast (R-18) and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-25). They noted that the Jones Act is a “pillar of American maritime policy” that should be credited “for successfully protecting our maritime economy and our national security for more than a century. Any consideration to limit its scope must be taken very seriously.”

Letter signatories note that Florida is a world leader in resupplying the growing number of LNG powered vessels and that good American jobs would be at risk if the waiver is granted. Some notable Members who have supported the U.S. maritime industry did not join their colleagues including Representatives Murphy, Demmings, Frankel and Wilson. However, it is not uncommon for Members to refrain from signing letters for various reasons unrelated to their general support for the maritime industry.

The letter from the Florida Delegation comes on the heels of similar opposition to the Puerto Rico application voiced by leaders on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (*see Feb. 7, 2019 Telex Times*).

SUPPORT THE JONES ACT!

Members, applicants and retirees are invited to let Congress know how important the Jones Act is to the nation’s economy and national security. A pair of web links will help you easily cobble together and dispatch a message to Congress urging them to stand up for this important statute that helps keep the U.S.-flag fleet afloat.

There are frequent challenges to the tried-and-true Merchant Marine Act of 1920 by ignorant or unknowledgeable sources who typically recommend paring down, waiving or repealing the Act. Their arguments are mirrored by overseas shipping interests who would love to replace American workers and gain access to the U.S. domestic maritime trade.

The loss of the Jones Act would give the green light to open up our coasts and inland waterways to foreign ships and mariners. While U.S. ships and seafarers are subject to strict Coast Guard licensing and documentation standards that ensure that safe practices are adhered to, our foreign counterparts are not.

Navy League has an easy, pre-formatted (but editable) Jones Act letter that you can sign onto and send to your Congressional delegation in a few clicks. You can get to it by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/y3ysgpk4> Another Jones Act letter, set up by the American Maritime Partnership, achieves the same effect. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/y2yd72y7> to get to the AMP letter. Five minutes of your time can really make a difference.

OAKLAND A's BALLPARK PLAN DRAWS IRE FROM UNIONS, BUSINESS & ENVIRONMENTALISTS

A proposal for a new waterfront baseball stadium for the Oakland A's has united many area labor unions, business interests and environmentalists in opposition.

The proposed 35,000-seat stadium, along with a hotel and housing developments, would be nestled at the Charles P. Howard Terminal near Jack London Square thus providing additional challenges for harbor trucking and vessel traffic.

The M.E.B.A. along with MM&P, ILWU, SUP, MFOW and IBU are some of the unions opposing the project and are joined by many others including the Sierra Club, Save the Bay, San Francisco Bar Pilots and the American Waterways Operators. Besides the burdens on an already overworked traffic area on both land and water, maritime interests fear that blinding lights from the stadium could upset safe vessel transport and help obscure navigation aids. Kayakers hoping for a home run ball or other watercraft gathered for the game would prove additional obstacles for vessels to avoid.

The site itself is of particular concern to environmental groups as it had been previously utilized as a manufactured gas plant, a coal tramway, an asphalt paving plant and has served as an oil tank storage area among other uses. Concerns have also been aired about a weak competitive process in selecting the site and fears that the project is being fast tracked without strict adherence to key oversight and environmental obligations.

“YOUR VOICES HAVE BEEN HEARD” – OUTCRY BY WEST VIRGINIA TEACHERS SHELVES DUBIOUS EDUCATION BILL

The West Virginia House of Delegates voted to indefinitely postpone an omnibus education bill after educators rallied against the legislation that would have provided teacher raises – alongside a series of unpalatable measures. The bill to overhaul the education system was formulated without consultation from teachers and would have paved the way for provisions that teachers say would have a detrimental effect on public school system including education savings accounts and public money spent on private and charter schools. House Minority Leader Tim Miley noted that “if you want true, meaningful, comprehensive education reform, it needs to be a product of having input from the actual

people who are in the classrooms to share with you what impediments they are finding in order to be able to teach students successfully.”

Even though defeating the bill meant costing themselves a pay raise, teachers chose to strike earlier this week and stood up for students by voicing their opposition to the contentious bill. Their collective voices spoke volumes and the West Virginia House subsequently voted 53-45 to table the bill.

“Your voices have been heard, and your voices will continue to be heard,” said West Virginia American Federation of Teachers President Fred Albert. “Don’t ever think that your voice does not matter, because this is proof that when you get active and you make your voice heard, it does make a difference.”

But teachers remained wary following the vote with bill architects pledging to continue efforts to ram their bill through the House. The labor unrest continued through Wednesday as AFT noted that 2 ½ weeks remained in the legislative session. AFT noted, “Educators want what children need, and that means staying at the Capitol to demand legislators fund West Virginia’s future and stop retaliating against educators and our communities.”

NEW PORT ENGINEER/MARINE MAINTENANCE COURSE COVERS GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School emphasized that their new Port Engineer/Marine Maintenance course will include training on government contracts. The course has an intended audience of those individuals at the technical-management level with responsibilities for marine maintenance and/or port engineering duties. It is designed to prepare those working as port engineers, or those looking to pursue a port engineer position. The initial course offerings will take place from April 1–19; August 5–23; and November 4–22.

It offers the following instructional topics: Engineering; Contracting, including for government contracts, and Shipyard Organizations; Preparing for a Maintenance period; Engineering Administration, including for government contracts, for an Availability Period; Fundamentals of Project Management including for government contracts; Weld Process/Procedures and Inspection; Dry Docking; Propulsion System Alignment; Corrosion, Surface Prep, Coatings, and Inspection; Contract Closeout, including for government contracts; and Shipyard Safety.

At this time, the April class is filling up quickly. Applications for the August and November classes will be accepted when registration opens up for the Fall Semester classes. Applications may be sent via the CMES website, fax (410) 822-7220, or email to applications@mebaschool.org

SATURDAY IS M.E.B.A.’s 144th ANNIVERSARY

Founded February 23, 1875 on the banks of the Great Lakes, the M.E.B.A. is celebrating its anniversary on Saturday. The Union’s ten founding fathers met in Cleveland, Ohio 144 years ago to form a united front to combat the oppressive and dangerous working conditions of the day. The founders were representatives of three Lakes associations, a river association and an ocean port – and over the course of a few days, they hammered out a cohesive Constitution for a national organization that protected and enhanced their members’ interests. This was the beginning of the National Marine Engineers’ Association. Eight years later the word “Beneficial” was added to the name.

Early on, our forefathers battled for favorable legislation to certify and license waterborne engineers. They secured U.S. officers – both deck and engine – aboard U.S.-flagships, helped repeal controversial seafarer fees, and raised the standard of living for all mariners. Those early struggles and many others paved the way for the worker protections and benefits we often take for granted today. Let there be rejoicing. Happy birthday M.E.B.A.!

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monday, March 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**

Tuesday, March 5 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**

Wednesday, March 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**

Thursday, March 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**

Friday, March 8 – **Honolulu@1100.**

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; mebahq@mebaunion.org. Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org