

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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TRUMP BUDGET BLUEPRINT BULKS UP DEFENSE, SECURITY AT EXPENSE OF OTHER AGENCIES, PROGRAMS

President Trump launched the first part of the budget process with the release of his preliminary spending proposal recommending haircuts at a number of federal departments and agencies. Overall, the theme of Trump's first budget blueprint is to increase military spending and lay the groundwork for his border wall. That increased funding would be offset in large part by domestic program cuts and deregulation.

The brunt of the cuts would be shouldered by the State Department (-\$10.9 billion); Environmental Protection Agency (-\$2.6 billion); Health & Human Services (-\$15.1 billion) and the Army Corps of Engineers (-\$1 billion). The budget outline is tough on the arts, environment, science and medical research.

The Transportation Department is looking at a \$2.4 billion budget cut in the proposal which represents a 13% of its budget. It appeared that the savings were attributable to a trim of the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment program, Amtrak, the Essential Air Service program as well as Transportation Investment (TIGER) grants. Indications are that the Maritime Security Program was unscathed in this proposal.

The US Army Corps of Engineers would endure \$1 billion (16.3%) in unspecified cuts under the proposed budget blueprint. The blueprint also doesn't specify cuts reportedly proposed for the Coast Guard. Those reports last week sparked outrage from 33 Senators who dispatched a letter to the President opposing such a drain on the agency's budget. Last week, the news broke that the Coast Guard would be taking a 14 percent, \$1.3 billion cut under the plan, but a White House spokesperson characterized those figures as "inaccurate."

At Commerce where a 16%, \$1.4 billion cut is requested, NOAA would be hit hard with \$250 million to be taken away from coastal research programs, and \$73 million removed from the Sea Grant program. The proposed cuts at the Labor Department (-2.6 billion) are centered around job and job training programs as well as grants for safety and health training. Among other cuts at the State Department, the budget for humanitarian aid to other countries would shrivel meaning that the Food Aid program, which utilizes a portion of its overseas shipments to U.S.-flag vessels, would suffer.

The full budget, which will be issued this spring, will make the extent of the proposed cuts and increases more transparent.

M.E.B.A. TAKES PART IN TTD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

M.E.B.A. was part of Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) meeting this last Sunday in San Antonio, TX that allowed the 32 unions that form the Executive Committee to focus and strategize on a series of important initiatives. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries.

Rep. Jeff Denham (R-CA) was a special guest and speaker at the meeting. The Congressman was part of a robust discussion on issues facing transport workers and the need for infrastructure funding.

“Our nation’s transportation system, and the men and women who build, operate and maintain it, play a crucial role in keeping our economy strong,” Rep. Denham said. “I look forward to working with transportation labor leaders to advance strategic infrastructure investments that will rebuild our vast transportation network and, in the process, drive middle-class job creation in California and throughout the nation.” Rep. Denham is a senior member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

M.E.B.A. President Marshall Ainley, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo and Legislative Director Matt Dwyer attended the meeting for the Union.

TTD Executives later unanimously checked off on a policy statement strongly endorsing cargo preference and trumpeting the U.S. Merchant Marine as critical to a strong national defense. “By letting the fleet wither despite repeated warnings, our government has created a crisis for the American maritime sector and its skilled mariners, and by extension, our national defense,” the statement reads. “Transportation labor calls on the Trump Administration and Congress to take these straightforward and important steps on cargo preference to help simultaneously support our national security, preparedness for humanitarian missions, and fortify middle class jobs.”

The Committee discussed and formulated a number of other policy statements on behalf of its member unions as well, including one concerning so-called right-to-work laws, which were discussed and condemned. Currently, a national right-to-work bill is being touted by some in Congress. Right-to-Work states average lower wages, fewer benefits and higher workplace death than states without such laws. The TTD policy statement, unanimously embraced by the Committee, noted, “at a time when wages are stagnant, this sinister policy reform would make it even harder for working people to secure decent wages that can support a family. It is incumbent upon all Members of Congress who believe in – or work with labor unions – to reject this scheme to undermine basic labor rights.”

NATIONAL M.E.B.A. CONVENTION TAKES PLACE ON MONDAY

M.E.B.A.’s National Convention is scheduled to take place on Monday at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School. Fifteen Convention Delegates elected during the 2016 District election will

meet to conduct the business of the N.M.E.B.A. Delegates will also vote for a new National Executive Committee (NEC) including National President.

The National M.E.B.A. is an administrative umbrella organization of M.E.B.A. Districts. Currently there is only one District under the N.M.E.B.A. (District No. 1-PCD, M.E.B.A.). The District holds and controls all the assets of the M.E.B.A. membership whereas the National holds the charter with the AFL-CIO.

The NEC consists of a National President, National Secretary-Treasurer, National Vice President and two NEC Members. M.E.B.A. members in good standing are welcomed to attend the Convention as observers.

National Convention Delegates will likely forward resolutions to more smoothly incorporate the District within the National umbrella. An expected resolution to be entertained by Delegates will be one to more closely align terms of National M.E.B.A. officers with the four-year terms of the District officers and to put National M.E.B.A. Conventions on a four-year schedule.

During the District elections, members elected the following 15 Delegates to represent the District at the National Convention: Marshall Ainley; Adam Vokac; Bill Van Loo; Erin Bertram; Jason Callahan; Tracy Burke; Rich Doherty; Jeff Duncan; Adam Smith; John McElhone; Mark Collins; Nils Djusberg; Mark S. Gallagher; Craig LaChance; and George Poor.

UPCOMING AMMV CONFERENCE

The American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) are readying for their Annual Convention and Reunion that will be staged in Reno, NV at the Sands Regency Hotel from March 26 to March 29. The AMMV is a national organization advocating recognition for the men and women of the U.S. Merchant Marine for their ongoing contributions to this country in peace and in war. If you can be in the area later this month, they would love for you to join in on the fun. The agenda for the conference is available at the AMMV website (www.ammv.us) and more details and an online registration form can be found there as well.

Sure to be discussed at the Convention will be efforts to assist the passage of H.R. 154, the WWII mariner compensation bill. Congressman Al Green (D-TX) re-introduced his bill in January. It would provide surviving WWII Merchant Mariners with a one-time \$25,000 benefit. Rep. Green introduced the same measure in the last session of Congress which received a slew of co-sponsors but made no legislative headway. A version of the bill has been forwarded in each session of Congress dating back many years but each attempt to “do the right thing” has fallen short of Congressional passage.

H.R. 154 would compensate qualifying individuals who were members of the Merchant Marine between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946 (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service). It has been referred to the Veterans Affairs Committee.

EXPIRATION OF SPECIAL EARLY RETURNS

The use of the Special Early Return Form will expire on March 31, 2017.

A Special Early Return occurs when permission is granted for an officer to return to Covered Employment while on vacation. The officer chooses whether or not to make up the Early Return days before their next vacation period. The "Special Early Return" is put to use when the officer is given the choice to not make up the Early Return days, effectively forfeiting the covered employment earned for the specific Early Return vacation days in question, which would include forfeiting credit earned for the Pension, Medical and Training Plans, etc.

This system was implemented by the Vacation Plan Trustees in 2003 for use in the case of personnel shortages caused by national emergencies and has been reviewed and reapproved by the Board of Trustees on an annual basis since then.

However, as determined by the M.E.B.A. District Executive Committee (DEC), circumstances no longer warrant approval for a Special Early Return. Therefore, after March 31, 2017, all Early Return days will have to be made up before your next vacation period begins.

GLEASON B-DAY TOMORROW - EAST COAST HALLS CLOSED

All M.E.B.A. East Coast halls and offices (except Headquarters) will be closed tomorrow, March 17th for Teddy Gleason's Birthday.

Thomas William Gleason was the President of the International Longshoremen's Association from 1963 to 1987. He came from a family of longshoremen and quit school at the age of 14 to work on the docks for 35 cents an hour. In 1919, he joined the ILA which he said was "just a gang of rebels" at that time. He was later blacklisted by steamship companies for his union activities. He made ends meet by working in a sugar factory by day and selling hot dogs at night on Coney Island. In the late 1940s, Teddy assumed leadership positions in one of the ILA locals. After the national union became embroiled in a corruption scandal in the early 1950s, Gleason ally William Bradley was elected as the new ILA President and Teddy was tapped as general organizer. A decade later Gleason was elected ILA President himself following two years as Executive V.P.

In early 1963, when the government planned to sell surplus grain to the Soviet Union, Gleason offered to remove his opposition to the plan if U.S.-flag ships were utilized. That arrangement was not honored by the Lyndon Johnson administration and Gleason made sure that the grain ships were held up at the docks for over a week. Gleason's organizing skills and political acumen led to big gains for the union but he also presided over a contraction of the ranks as containerization dramatically altered the industry. He was most proud of the guaranteed annual income he won for dockworkers. "We got everything we fought for," Gleason said summing up his ILA service at the time of his 1987 retirement. He was succeeded by John Bowers. Gleason died in 1992 at the age of 92.

He overtly celebrated his Irish heritage and was named grand marshal of the New York St. Patrick's Day parade in 1984. As a result, St. Patty's Day was selected as the day to honor the life and legacy of one of our greatest trade unionists – Teddy Gleason.

REMINDER FOR GOVT. FLEET MEMBERS ON VPDS/VSO

As a reminder, Government Fleet members seeking M.E.B.A. work outside the MSC/NOAA/Army Corps fleet will need to complete the necessary security training – either Vessel Security Officer (VSO) or Vessel Personnel with Designated Security Duties (VPDS). There were a few instances when Government Fleet members trying to make the transition to deep-sea were temporarily derailed because of their lack of the VPDS/VSO endorsement. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School provides the necessary training. Those who need to get up to speed should give them a ring and/or visit their website at www.mebaschool.org. The training can also be obtained at other facilities throughout the country. The CMES can help isolate a nearby location for you.

SIGN UP FOR M.E.B.A. VACATION PLAN DIRECT DEPOSIT

Designed for convenience, M.E.B.A. members can help themselves by taking advantage of the Vacation Plan Direct Deposit that will help save them time and ease Plans processing costs. Authorization forms are available from the Plans Office, Plans Outport Offices and at the Plans' website – www.mebaplans.org (Forms, Vacation). Complete details are available on the Plans' site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, April 3 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, April 4 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, April 5 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, April 6 – L.A. @1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, April 7 – Honolulu@1100.



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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.

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