

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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\$1.3 TRILLION SPENDING BILL, COVERS FULL MSP, FOOD AID

The Maritime Security Program will enjoy full funding for the rest of Fiscal Year '18 under the massive \$1.3 trillion Omnibus spending bill that is expected to gain Congressional approval sometime tomorrow. The House passed the 2,232 page bill earlier this afternoon with the Senate expected to follow suit on Friday to avert another government shutdown shortly before the midnight deadline approaches.

The President's budget had recommended only \$214 million for MSP. However, bipartisan support for the program that ensures a U.S.-flag presence in the international trades led Members to support the appropriate \$300 million MSP funding level.

In addition, Food for Peace is funded at \$1.7 billion in the Omnibus - the President had recommended no food aid funding in his budget proposal. Food for Peace helps feed starving Third World nations while providing critical support to U.S. shipping and American farmers.

Also, the spending bill provides \$300 million for the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel program. This money is for design and construction of training school ships for the state maritime academies. In addition to their function as training vessels for cadets, the ships would also be used to provide humanitarian and disaster relief as needed.

DELAWARE PILOT LAUNCH OPERATORS RATIFY NEW 5-YEAR AGREEMENT

The M.E.B.A. launch operators on the Delaware Bay and River have a new 5-year contract in place after bargaining unit members ratified a Memorandum of Agreement. The launch operators are part of the Pilots' Association for the Bay and River Delaware. Our members maintain the launches and transport ship pilots to commercial vessels transiting the Bay and River and its tributaries.

The new agreement went into effect in February and stretches out to 2022. The MOA ushers in improvements to wages and vacation with increases to health and welfare benefits. Bargaining unit members gathered last month and endorsed the new agreement in a ratification vote that put the new contract into effect. M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan and NY/NJ Patrolman Nico Sermoneta oversaw the contract process for the Union.

MARITIME INDUSTRY DELUGES CONGRESS DURING ANNUAL SAIL-IN

A cross-section of maritime industry representatives, including M.E.B.A. and AMC, turned out in force on Capitol Hill on Tuesday to broadcast the importance of U.S. shipping and solicit support for crucial statutes and programs.

M.E.B.A. and AMC officials, staffers and an M.E.B.A. retiree (Patrick Bevers) were peppered throughout 26 Sail-In groups (95 participants) that visited 169 Senate and House Members from both sides of the aisle.

This was the ninth edition of the annual Maritime Congressional Sail-In which helps solidify support with lawmakers and reminds Congress about the importance of our industry to the economy and national security. M.E.B.A. officials participating included President Marshall Ainley, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo, Gulf Coast V.P. Erin Bertram and Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan.

Lawmakers were informed about the dire need for increased peacetime cargo to help sustain the foreign trade U.S.-flag fleet. They were reminded that their support of the Jones Act, Maritime Security Program and cargo preference is critical. As you know, lies and misinformation about the Jones Act were publicly aired following Hurricane Maria's devastation of Puerto Rico. Though their premise that the Jones Act hampered relief efforts was soon discredited, many who believed the lie never learned the truth. Sail-In participants made sure Members of Congress understood that much of the public had been duped. In addition, they asked Members to support the full \$300 million MSP authorization. The Trump budget recommended only authorizing MSP at \$214 million. A lesser enacted amount would send the wrong message to those companies that continue to make capital investments in their vessels that participate in the program. Members of Congress were also urged to support cargo generating programs that help keep the U.S. Merchant Marine afloat – including the vital mariner pool – such as Food for Peace and Export-Import Bank cargoes. In Senate offices, Sail-In participants asked Members to sign an MSP letter and in the House they were asked to sign a Cargo Preference letter and join the Maritime Caucus.

As always, you are urged to write a letter or email your District and State legislators to ask them to do the right thing when it comes to the maritime industry.

M.E.B.A. ANSWERS THE VIRTUAL BELL, ACES PAPER BREAKOUT

On Day Two of a massive tabletop Government fleet activation, M.E.B.A. satisfied our exercise obligations by filling engine and deck jobs on over 20 vessels. The Maritime Administration oversees this annual simulated breakout that helps evaluate whether the industry's workforce is capable of supporting a major ramp-up of surge sealift ships. This was a paper exercise and mariners were not required to report to the vessels.

Specifically, the nine-day Command Post Exercise that began on March 20th simulates the activation of the Ready Reserve Force fleet and Military Sealift Command surge vessels to test procedures and coordination necessary to meet strategic sealift requirements.

The exercise began on Tuesday around midday (East Coast time) requiring a flurry of phone calls to members with the appropriate licenses and qualifications. Members currently serving aboard vessels were not eligible for the exercise. M.E.B.A. had points of contact on each coast overseeing the exercise and each proved relentless in the task as they summoned qualified mariners and began to "crew up the ships" on paper. Many thanks to NY/NJ Patrolman Nico Sermoneta and Norfolk Branch Agent

Tracy Burke, Tampa Branch Agent Adam Smith and Oakland Patrolman Max Alper who ensured that M.E.B.A. aced the exercise.

The M.E.B.A.-crewed MarAd (RRF) vessels that were “activated” are managed by Patriot Contract Services, Matson Navigation and Keystone Shipping. Several Patriot-managed Surge LMSR vessels, currently in the process of turnover, were part of the exercise but met requirements since the ships were already crewed with full complements of expert M.E.B.A. officers.

Those who filled virtual jobs are not precluded from taking actual shipping work. Exercise participants may receive a follow-up email from MarAd in the second week of the exercise to verify their information and answer a few simple survey questions.

The new M.E.B.A. database helped officials better coordinate the exercise from our end. As the system becomes more polished and additional functions are implemented, it should become even more valuable in fluidly assisting future exercises and other endeavors. Members, applicants and retirees should make sure to keep the Union updated with their latest contact information and other important data to assist our records and ability to better pursue initiatives and job opportunities for our membership.

Our thanks go out to all those who participated in Breakout 2018. In addition, appreciation should be expressed to all the officials, dispatchers and staffers spread out across the M.E.B.A. halls and offices who banded together to ensure that the Union met the Government requirements many days before the deadline.

Had the activation been real, members were poised to rush to the defense of our country. The Union once again demonstrated that in every conflict, real or simulated, M.E.B.A. will always answer the bell.

SIX-UNION MLA CONVERGES AT M.E.B.A. HQ

Representatives of the six-unions that make up the Maritime Labor Alliance gathered at M.E.B.A. Headquarters earlier today to address new industry developments and strategize on issues of importance. The MLA is a cooperation between the ARA, IBU, ILA, ILWU, M.E.B.A. and the MM&P that fights to protect MLA member jurisdictions, working conditions and labor rights. M.E.B.A. was represented at the meeting by President Marshall Ainley, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo (who also serves as MLA Secretary-Treasurer), Gulf Coast V.P. Erin Bertram and Political Director Matt Dwyer.

Each of the affiliates gave a report at the meeting and a variety of topics were tackled including Liberty Maritime, Alaska Marine Highway System, Maersk Line Ltd. contract and developments with the Pasha-MM&P unfair labor practice complaint. They also discussed a myriad of legal and legislative issues. The MLA also did an officers’ election for the year. MM&P’s Don Marcus was re-elected as MLA President. M.E.B.A.’s Bill Van Loo was re-elected as MLA Secretary-Treasurer.

FIRE ON MAERSK SHIP

Members were involved in extinguishing flames after a fire broke out in a cargo hold onboard the MAERSK KENSINGTON last Friday. All crewmembers were reported safe and unharmed.

The vessel was enroute from Salalah, Oman to Suez when the alert went up. Safety measures were taken immediately and the crew reacted swiftly and followed procedure. After gauging the

circumstances, they released CO2 into the cargo hold to contain the flames. The cause of the fire is being investigated.

Earlier in the month, there was a fire originating in the cargo hold of one of the company's foreign-flagged vessels, the MAERSK HONAM. Sadly, four mariners perished in that tragedy. However, the company noted that preliminary findings in the KENSINGTON fire leads them to believe there is no link between the cargoes in the KENSINGTON and HONAM incidents.

The KENSINGTON was carrying 3518 containers. The vessel was built in 2007.

SUCCESSFUL AMMV CONVENTION

Seagoing veterans of every war and conflict since World War II gathered in St. Louis last week as the American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) staged their 32nd National Convention.

A successful affair, achievements of the greatest generation in World War II's seafaring were lionized and attendees encouraged promotion of legislation recognizing their integral contributions. Support was urged for a bill introduced by Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) (S. 2127) that would award the Congressional Gold Medal in honor of merchant mariners serving during World War II. If passed, a single gold medal of appropriate design would be awarded to WWII U.S. merchant mariners on behalf of Congress. It would be placed in the American Merchant Marine Museum and duplicates could then be struck to be made available to the public.

Great Lakes Maritime Academy Superintendent RADM Jerry Achenbach spoke to attendees about the state academies and their increasing costs. He also talked about the ever-increasing burdens of regulation, such as STCW, upon mariners. American Maritime Congress President Jim Caponiti served as the four-day event's keynote speaker and he briefed the gathering on modern day realities in the industry including attacks on the Jones Act and the need to increase preference cargo, bulk up the mariner pool and seek out new opportunities for U.S. shipping including energy exports.

AMMV is a great organization and you can visit the following link to join up and stay current: <http://ammv.us/join-us-now>

JONES ACT FLEET DESERVES PRAISE AT 6-MONTH MARK OF PUERTO RICO RECOVERY

It has been six months since Hurricane Maria tore into Puerto Rico leaving a trail of destruction and misery. The Jones Act fleet has played an extraordinary role in the island's recovery. Crowley and TOTE are the primary Jones Act carriers servicing Puerto Rico but Pasha/Sunrise, SEACOR and others have aided efforts as well, and other companies such as Norwegian Cruise Line raised vast sums of relief contributions for the Puerto Rican people.

The government relief effort, run primarily through FEMA and USACE, involved the transportation of tens of thousands of shipping containers loaded with water, meals and other life-sustaining materials, as well as transporting power poles, electrical transformers and other infrastructure. Rebuilding the power supply infrastructure continues to be a work in progress for both residents and businesses – even as the next hurricane seasons begins in a few months.

After Hurricane Maria, unknowledgeable talking heads and anonymous bloggers falsely faulted the Jones Act for preventing delivery of vital relief supplies. However, it became apparent that U.S. ships

had delivered an overabundance of relief supplies but damaged island infrastructure prevented their dispersal. Those who understand the real story continue efforts to educate those who still believe the lies they were told.

FAULTY IMMERSION SUITS FOUND DURING COAST GUARD INSPECTION

During a recent inspection, U.S. Coast Guard Port State Control examiners discovered a significant flaw involving almost all of an undisclosed vessel's immersion suits. The examiners noted that the glue used to attach the main zipper to the body of the suit had failed. Failure of the suit at this location will prevent the suit from achieving a watertight seal. Such conditions present serious risk to crewmembers in a survival situation. Due to the high failure rate discovered during the Coast Guard check (35 out of 40 suits were defective), they issued a Safety Alert (#03-18) urging mariners to inspect immersion suits for this potentially unsafe condition.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, April 2 – Boston@1200;

Tuesday, April 3 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Wednesday, April 4 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, April 5 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, April 6 – 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