

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War Since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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CONGRESSIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE WITNESSES, MEMBERS BATTLE BACK AGAINST ANTI-JONES ACT LIES

Witnesses and Members of Congress at a Congressional subcommittee this week railed against the multitude of lies foisted on the public in recent weeks perpetuated by foreign interests and anti-Jones Act activists. The House Transportation & Infrastructure's Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation Subcommittee hosted a hearing on Tuesday that helped corroborate that the Jones Act – in no way – has impeded Puerto Rico relief efforts. Days before the Jones Act was waived for a ten-day period, 10,000 full containers with many food and relief items were lined up at Puerto Rican ports unable to be distributed around the country because of ruined infrastructure. Poor and biased reporting has misled many in recent weeks into believing the Jones Act has prevented millions of hard-hit Puerto Ricans from receiving needed relief supplies. Many of them believe the falsehood that the Jones Act prevents cargo delivery from foreign ships emanating from other countries. Two-thirds of Puerto Rico imports are carried by foreign-flag ships coming from overseas ports – and foreign interests would love to swoop in and take over the U.S. portion of the trade.

The Department of Homeland Security announced today that it has not received a request to extend the 10-day waiver which expires at the end of this weekend. DHS spokesperson David Lapan said, "We believe that extending the waiver is unnecessary to support the humanitarian relief efforts on the Island."

In joint testimony at the hearing, maritime labor – M.E.B.A., MM&P, AMO & SIU – stressed the national, economic and homeland security benefits of the Jones Act. They pointed out that "the claim the Jones Act is impeding relief efforts is a lie. No matter how many times those bought-and-paid-for academics and folks on the news want to repeat it – it's still a lie...Some of the proposals being made – whether for long-term waivers of the Jones Act – or for a permanent exception for Puerto Rico – are foolhardy and misguided at best – and blatantly anti-American opportunism at worst."

The unions said repeal of the Act would put "foreign companies and foreign workers ahead of American companies and American workers. It would represent the antithesis of the President's economic policy, while at the same time undermining national security and creating a dangerous new vector for illegal immigration..."

Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), who was one of the first Congressional members to endorse Donald Trump in the 2016 election, agreed and noted “President Trump went very anti-Trump by waiving the Jones Act. He went anti-American worker, anti-American-made and basically sold out to Wall Street and big corporate interests that don’t want American-made.”

Witnesses including TOTE’s Anthony Chiarello, Crowley’s Michael Roberts, and John Graykowski representing the Shipbuilders Council of America, dispelled the untruths forwarded by anti-Jones Act forces and reaffirmed the critical importance of the statute to the U.S. flag. None of the Subcommittee members speaking at the hearing – Republican and Democrat – were sucked in by the slew of anti-Jones Act lies broadcast in the media over the last two weeks and each voiced support for the Act.

During his closing statement, a wound-up Duncan Hunter launched into a vehement defense of the Jones Act pointing out that every major modern country has such laws and that even famed economist Adam Smith heavily endorsed cabotage statutes. The Chairman noted that tens of thousands of vessels frequent the nation’s interior waterways flying the U.S.-flag and operated by Americans. Rep. Hunter declared, “I’d like to ask the American people if they agree that we should have Yemenis, Pakistanis, Egyptians...Iranians...operating barges and carriers in our inland waters carrying chemicals...fuels...coal...gases...carrying things that are explosive. If you want a foreign company with a foreign-crewed ship – that you have no idea where they come from – operating on your waterways and bringing highly explosive deadly things to your ports every single day on the inland waterways – getting rid of the Jones Act would allow that.”

“If the President stands for the American worker,” Rep. Hunter thundered, “and if the President stands for American jobs and national security – which he has said over and over that he does – then what he did was a mistake and he won’t do it again and instead of lambasting the Jones Act or waiving it, he’ll be standing up for it in his next speech.”

To which Subcommittee Ranking Member John Garamendi (D-CA) proclaimed, “Amen.”

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR THE JONES ACT

With all the anti-Jones Act lies being forced upon the public in the wake of Hurricane Maria, it's vital that you emphasize the importance of the Jones Act to your Congressional delegation and refute the people who have been duped into supporting the arguments of foreign interests.

Don’t be shy posting an online comment to a biased news article or penning an editorial for your local newspaper. Some valuable facts can be accessed from M.E.B.A.’s website (www.mebaunion.org) that will assist you when writing to your Congressional representation or responding to some no-nothing who spouts off misleading anti-Jones Act nonsense.

The Navy League has made it easy to let your lawmakers know how you feel about this important issue. They created a ready-made pro-Jones Act letter accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/y9e6k56j> With a few clicks, you can help counteract the lies and let your Congressional representation know that America needs the Jones Act to stay strong.

HALLS & OFFICES CLOSED FOR COLUMBUS DAY

M.E.B.A. Union halls and offices will be closed on Monday in observance of Columbus Day.

This is the 525th anniversary of Columbus's voyage to the "New World." His celebrated 1492 voyage brought the 41-year old Columbus to the Canary Islands, Bahamas and Cuba among other stops. It wasn't until his third voyage in 1498 that he made it to the American mainland at the mouth of the Orinoco River in Venezuela. His interesting grasp of geography led him to believe that he had landed in the East Indies – and the Native Americans he encountered were since known as "Indians." He never set foot in North America.

It is generally accepted that Cristoforo Colombo was an Italian from Genoa. Columbus's travels are a source of pride to the Italian community which embraces the federal holiday that became official in all 50 states in 1971. Much of the romanticism of the Columbus voyages was perpetuated by author Washington Irving who catalogued the explorations in a series of books which were a mixture of history and fiction. One of the myths that continues to be believed today due to Irving's work, is that Columbus set out on his voyage to disprove the theory that the world was flat by accomplishing his mission without falling off the edge of the world. Irving's books have certainly helped blur the lines in understanding what is fact or fiction in the life of this complex man. Modern times have brought new public awareness to some of the more shameful aspects of Columbus's interaction with the New World. He is accused of slave trading, genocide and stealing Indian land. Unquestionably, the subsequent Spanish colonization of the Americas was not beneficial to the indigenous peoples.

Columbus became more religiously devout in his later years claiming to be privy to heavenly voices and believing that his explorations were part of a fulfilled divine prophecy that served as another step on the way to the Last Judgment. He died in Spain in May of 1506 at the age 55 of a heart attack supposedly induced by Reiter's Syndrome. Brought on by bacterial infection, Reiter's causes arthritis throughout the body and urinary tract disturbances. Enjoy your Columbus Day on Monday!

PATRIOT NEEDS 1st A/Es

Patriot Contract Services is currently seeking resumes for 1st Assistant Engineers for the Watson-class vessels. Qualified candidates must possess a valid USCG Unlimited 1st Engineer License with Gas Turbine endorsement. The position requires government training and the ability to meet the eligibility required for a security clearance. Please direct all resumes to: Dave Nolan, Marine Personnel Manager, Patriot Contracting Services, dave.nolan@asmhq.org – (925) 296-2050 or (510) 387-6340.

USNS COMFORT ARRIVES IN PUERTO RICO

The Mercy-class Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS COMFORT arrived in Puerto Rico on October 3rd and is assisting humanitarian relief efforts following Hurricane Maria. While in San Juan, the hospital ship with M.E.B.A. engineers aboard will host a summit with key stakeholders to synchronize efforts for the ship's mission throughout the area.

MLL, E & M SHIPS TALKS CONTINUE, CONTRACTS EXTENDED

MLL, E-Ships & M-Ships contract discussions continued in Norfolk, VA, last week on September 26–29 with rank and file engineer Brian Conroy in attendance. While forward progress has been made, there are still many issues to resolve and significant work will be necessary to bridge the gaps between proposals. The parties agreed to extend all three contracts through November 15th, 2017 as all contracts were expiring on 9/30/17. The parties agreed on dates for future negotiation sessions in both October and November, but the October dates were abruptly cancelled this week leaving only dates in November. Anyone interested in attending the negotiations as rank and file should contact Atlantic Coast Vice President Jason Callahan by email at jcallahan@mebaunion.org.

LAST CHANCE FOR G&W RAFFLE TICKETS

There's only one week left to support the Good & Welfare Fund through the purchase of \$2 raffle tickets. The drawing is set for a week from tonight, October 12th, at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School during a Silent Auction & Fundraiser. Ticketholders don't need to be present at the drawing to win. The winner will receive 50% of the proceeds with the other half going to the Fund. The raffle is open to anyone who wants to purchase a ticket. Every ticket you buy puts another dollar into the Good & Welfare Fund. Get them at any Union hall at the event itself. You can contact Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo at Headquarters or any hall official for further info.

NMC NEEDS DECK OFFICER

The National Maritime Center has a permanent position available in Martinsburg, WV, for someone with a shipboard deck officer background to assist with evaluation and approval of training courses and programs, qualified assessors, designated examiners, and instructors. Additional information, including qualifications and application instructions, can be found on the USA Jobs website under announcement numbers 17-2094-SE-WS-D and 17-2094-SE-WS-M.

COAST GUARD ISSUES EL FARO FINDINGS

The Coast Guard issued its final report in the matter of the EL FARO sinking, a document released to the public on the two-year anniversary of the tragedy. The 790-foot U.S.-flag cargo ship sank near the Bahamas in October 2015 as Hurricane Joaquin swept through the area. All 33 crewmembers perished.

The report pinpointed a number of causal factors including crew fatigue, training and cargo loading, as well as violations of safety and procedural regulations. The Coast Guard said it will pursue around \$80,000 in civil penalties against shipowner TOTE for violations involving work and rest periods as well as infractions related to emergency procedure and repair work. In addition, they proposed 31 safety recommendations for future actions. The Coast Guard Commandant must still sign off on the recommendations and additional comments will be solicited for 30 days. The full report can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/y9dobx8e> The National Transportation Safety Board has concluded its own investigation and recently announced it would release its conclusions and recommendations on December 12.

LIBERTY ARBITRATION FINAL AWARD FOR 2011 CONTRACT VIOLATION

The Union recently received a final award issued by the arbitrator in its long running dispute with Liberty Maritime over the manning of five Liberty bulk carriers with non-M.E.B.A. personnel. The initial arbitrator's award, dated December 2, 2015, ruled in favor of M.E.B.A. Specifically, the arbitrator found that pursuant to the terms of the parties' labor contract, M.E.B.A. and Liberty were not at impasse in their negotiations for a successor labor agreement. In the arbitrator's September 6, 2016, supplemental award, the arbitrator agreed with M.E.B.A. that the Union had been harmed as a result of Liberty's conduct. Therefore, in order to remedy that harm the arbitrator ordered Liberty to pay damages to the Union. The Arbitrator's damage award ruling was issued last week and was a topic of discussion at Union hall monthly membership meetings this week. The Union will provide further updates on the award as developments occur.

CONTINUED PICKETING OF LIBERTY OVER PEACE VIOLATION

Many thanks to members, applicants and retirees who continue to support the Union against Liberty Maritime over the company's recent violation of the contract with the M.E.B.A. Union members were at the dock on Sunday to picket the LIBERTY PEACE at Hawaii's Port of Kalaeloa - Barbers Point Harbor in Oahu (USNAX). Liberty crewed up the newly acquired U.S.-flag vessel with labor other than the M.E.B.A. Sunday marked the fourth picket against Liberty in the last month following the first in Beaumont, TX, which was interrupted by Hurricane Harvey and prior to the vessel being reflagged. At the same time Liberty members from the NY/NJ area staged an informational picket at Liberty Headquarters in Lake Success, NY. M.E.B.A. more recently staged an information picket in San Diego, CA on September 22-24. These informational pickets are highlighting Liberty's clear breach of the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement which has provided for M.E.B.A. members onboard Liberty vessels for the last 29 years. The M.E.B.A has jurisdiction over the licensed deck and engineering officers onboard any vessel crewed by Liberty Maritime and their affiliates.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, November 6 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, November 7 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, November 8 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, November 9 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, November 10 - 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