

## **Online Shipping Rule Referendum to Take Place in December**

M.E.B.A.'s first online District-wide Referendum will take place during the month of December. On November 9, each M.E.B.A. member was snail-mailed a letter, to their address on record with Headquarters, informing them of specifics and detailing how to participate in the online vote. The vote takes place from December 1 to December 31. A rank and file tallying committee will ensure the eligibility of voters and the integrity of the process.

The one-question referendum asks members whether they wish to change the M.E.B.A. Shipping Rules to permit a new Group III Applicant to remain on the Port Relief List for one year from the date of their first registration. The Rule change is designed to extend the window for first-time applicants to seek viable Port Relief opportunities as they begin their seafaring careers. The online referendum stems from a member-driven resolution that was passed at Union hall meetings by a 99-6 vote earlier this year.

Members should make sure their dues are current so they can participate in the vote. Only members in good standing are eligible. Those whose dues are not current (paid through the end of the year) will not be permitted access to the voter database.

The Union has held online votes for various M.E.B.A. bargaining units in the past, but a membership-wide online vote for referendums (not to include officer elections or ratification of Deep-Sea contracts) was only recently enabled following a By-Laws change that keeps the Union up with modern times.