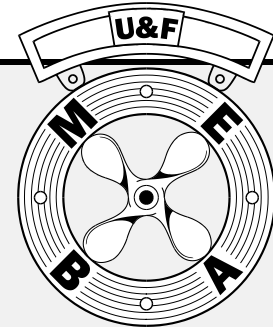


# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

*JANUARY 2018*



The political atmosphere in Washington has been hotly contested over the past month, but the legislative front has remained relatively quiet. While Congress is considering big ticket items such as funding the federal government, immigration, and international nuclear security, policymakers have had little appetite to undertake the nuts and bolts of legislating. Though “no action” is often better than action when it comes to some maritime issues, the M.E.B.A. legislative team has been laying the groundwork for full funding for the Maritime Security Program (MSP).

After the drastic increase of funding to the program in 2017, it will be very important to secure full funding as Congress enters the budget process in the early spring. In an atmosphere of budget cuts and sequestration, legislators are constantly looking for programs to cut. The MSP remains popular among the Department of Defense, the Maritime Administration, and the Transportation Command, but Members of Congress need constant education as to the importance and value of the program.

Members, applicants and retirees can help ensure the integrity of important maritime statutes by supporting the M.E.B.A.’s Political Action Fund. The PAF is a key tool to educate lawmakers about the importance of U.S. shipping. It fortifies the M.E.B.A.’s political relationships in Congress, the White House and in State Capitols. The Fund helps our Union succeed in Washington and is crucial in helping to uphold the maritime policies and programs that are frequently under attack by uneducated lawmakers and interest groups. See your local Union hall for more details or make a contribution online via the M.E.B.A. website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) (select “M.E.B.A. Payment Portal”).

M.E.B.A. Benefit Plans has a new option for participants to contribute to the PAF from vacation checks. You can choose any amount as a one-time contribution to be deducted from your vacation check. This can be in addition to your monthly contribution, or alone as a one-time deduction. There is a space to fill in the amount on the front of the Application for Vacation Pay. A PAF receipt will be mailed to you with your vacation check. Two new vacation applications have been posted on the M.E.B.A. Benefit Plans’ website ([www.mebaplans.org](http://www.mebaplans.org)) - the first for Cleveland/Interlake. The other is the general Application for Vacation Pay. If you have any questions, please contact the Vacation Plan in Baltimore or one of the Representatives in the Outport offices.