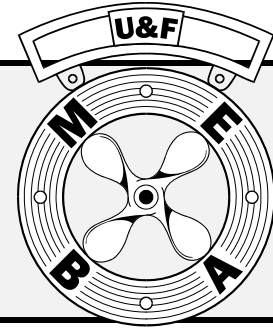

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

JULY 2020



Bills would Establish Tanker Security Fleet

On June 11th, Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS), Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, introduced the MarAd Reauthorization Act of 2020, which would establish a Tanker Security Fleet of 10 commercial U.S.-flag petroleum product tankers, at a total cost of \$60 million at \$6 million per vessel. The program would be modeled after the Maritime Security Program reflecting our national defense needs and would reduce the U.S. military's reliance on foreign flag commercial vessels while also expanding the qualified mariner pool. In late June, the House Armed Services Committee introduced a nearly identical provision in its annual defense bill known as the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2021 that would do the same. The M.E.B.A. continues educating Members of Congress on the importance of a strong U.S. flag commercial fleet while advocating for the passage of the provision, which has strong bipartisan support.

House Defense Bill Includes COVID-19 Relief for MSP

On June 25th, Representative Adam Smith (D-WA), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, released the text of the annual defense bill commonly referred to as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which includes \$180 million in additional funding for the Maritime Security Program. The funding is intended to provide relief to the U.S. flag fleet of vessels enrolled in the Program as the industry responds to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The USA Maritime Coalition, comprised of the M.E.B.A. along with various maritime labor unions, maritime trade associations, and multiple U.S. flag carriers, have continually requested this emergency relief funding for the past three months as enrolled vessels in the MSP face protracted lay-ups due to declining civilian and government cargo volumes. While receiving funding would require a separate act of appropriations by Congress, this is an important first step to ensure continued operations of these vessels and full employment of the mariners onboard.
