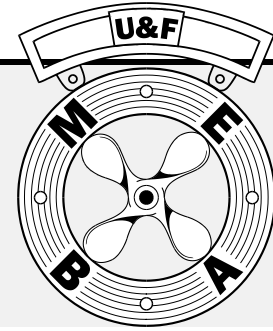


LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

MAY 2019



An 11th hour intervention at the White House by a group of Republican lawmakers appears to have drowned out the drumbeat towards the possible issuance of a Jones Act waiver that had become a real possibility last week. News reports indicated that President Trump had been leaning toward exempting Puerto Rico from the Jones Act following the territory's request for a 10-year waiver as part of the island's renewable energy push and their desire to utilize foreign-flag carriers for the shipment of American Liquefied Natural Gas. Bloomberg News had reported that the President was swayed by key advisors and certain oil and gas industry executives, to strongly consider issuing "some type of waiver" as part of the request. The media was awash this week with misleading anti-Jones Act opinion pieces regurgitated by the usual suspects such as the CATO Institute, the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation.

The Jones Act has strong support from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, but Republican Senators believed a GOP-only meeting with the President on the eve of his decision would prove the best avenue toward making their case. The pro-Jones Act coalition of lawmakers that met with the President and key White House officials yesterday included Sens. Dan Sullivan (R-AK), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), John Kennedy (R-LA), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.) and Congressman Steve Scalise (R-LA). White House officials attending the Roosevelt Room meeting with the President, among others, included Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, National Security Adviser John Bolton and National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow as well as strong pro-Jones Act advocates such as Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and Trade Policy Adviser Peter Navarro. Lawmakers and others made the case against a Jones Act exemption which can only be granted when "necessary in the interest of national defense." Sen. Cassidy and the contingent of lawmakers strongly warned against the waiver telling the President that, "The Jones Act is essential to preserve our domestic shipping industry and protect our national and economic security." Shortly after the meeting, several lawmakers in attendance confirmed that the President had backed off the idea of granting a waiver while giving his assurance that the integrity of the Jones Act would be maintained.

Without the Jones Act and other programs such as the Maritime Security Program and U.S. cargo preference requirements, qualified American mariners will eventually disappear and the carriage of critical national-interest cargo will be forfeited to foreign mariners and overseas interests. That is why the preservation of the Jones Act and other statutes and programs, which help maintain the U.S.-flag fleet have been the focus of M.E.B.A.'s Political Action Fund.

The P.A.F. is able to utilize its limited resources to educate lawmakers and push back against misguided attempts to eliminate the Jones Act. Members, Applicants and Retirees are encouraged to support the P.A.F. to provide the ammunition it needs to fight for a thriving U.S.-flag industry – instead of one that is simply maintaining a pulse. For your job, and for the future of U.S.-flag shipping, please make a contribution to the P.A.F. today. You can stop by a local union hall or visit the M.E.B.A. website to sign up for regular contributions. From the "Members" tab on the M.E.B.A. Homepage (www.mebaunion.org) select "Political Action Fund."