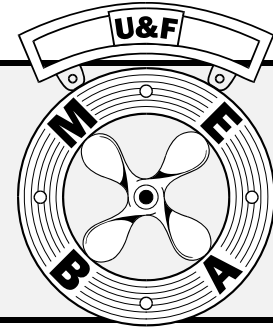


LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2020



Congress Returns to DC with Long To-Do List Including Pending Maritime Initiatives

After failure by the White House and Congressional leaders to negotiate a deal in July on a second comprehensive COVID-19 relief package to extend expiring federal unemployment benefits, Congress returns to Washington after a month-long break with a number of unsettled issues remaining before the November election. For example, immediate action must be taken to fund the federal government before the Sept 30th deadline to avert another government shutdown. In addition, a number of federal support programs established under the CARES Act are set to expire such as the “Paycheck Protection Program” and economic relief for the U.S. airline industry, as our economy grapples with the ongoing pandemic. Congress must also pass the annual National Defense Authorization Act which includes a number of critical maritime provisions supported by the M.E.B.A. such as relief for vessels enrolled in the Maritime Security Program, the establishment of the Tanker Security Fleet program, a study by the non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) to examine the compliance of cargo preference laws by federal agencies, and changes to the Administrative waiver process that would strengthen the Jones Act.

Bipartisan House Letter Urges Members to Support the Proposed Tanker Security Fleet Program

Representatives Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) are collecting signatures for a bipartisan “Dear Colleague” letter in support of the proposed Oil Tanker Security Fleet Program. In July, the House of Representatives passed the annual defense bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2021, which includes the establishment of a 10-vessel program modeled after the Maritime Security Program, to support the carriage of fuel on privately-owned, militarily-useful

U.S.-flag product tankers to meet the energy needs of the Department of Defense. Citing the need to strengthen the U.S.-flag fleet and address the shortage of qualified American mariners, the letter states, “A tanker security program as passed in H.R. 6395 would begin to rectify this situation, adding additional commercial vessels to the U.S.-flag fleet and creating new jobs for American mariners.”

The letter is addressed to the “Big Four” Chairpersons and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees as they work to negotiate the differences of their respective defense bills through a conference committee in preparation of a final vote and the President’s signature by the end of the year.

September __, 2020

The Honorable Adam Smith, Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James M. Inhofe, Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry, Ranking
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Smith, Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Thornberry, and Ranking Member Reed:

As you work to finalize a conference agreement on the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we write to convey our strong support for retaining section 3511 of H.R. 6395, the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021. This provision would authorize the establishment of a tanker security program comprised of ten privately-owned, militarily-useful U.S.-flag product tankers crewed by licensed and unlicensed American merchant mariners.

We are deeply concerned about the decline in the number of militarily-useful commercial vessels operating under the U.S. flag and, consequently, in the number of trained and qualified American merchant mariners available to crew the vessels needed by the Department of Defense to protect America's interests and to support American troops deployed around the world. A tanker security program as passed in H.R. 6395 would begin to rectify this situation, adding additional commercial vessels to the U.S.-flag fleet and creating new jobs for American mariners. This program, modeled after the successful and cost-efficient Maritime Security Program, represents an important maritime policy initiative not only for the maritime workforce but for our nation's commercial sealift readiness capability.

Significantly, Lieutenant General, USMC, John Broadmeadow, Deputy Commander, United States Transportation Command, told Congress last year that "a 10-tanker program will be a welcome start to begin to address the gap in U.S.-flagged bulk fuel delivery."

In short, establishing a tanker security fleet would begin to reduce our military's reliance on foreign flag vessels by ensuring that a greater portion of the fuel needed by the Department of Defense is transported by American mariners on U.S. flag vessels. It would not promote or expand the production of petroleum products but would instead begin to end America's almost total reliance on foreign flag of convenience vessels to meet the energy needs of the Department of Defense at sea and around the world.

We urge that the FY 2021 conference agreement retain section 3511 of H.R. 6395.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.



A bold voice for transportation workers

August 28, 2020

TTD Supports Inclusion of Tanker Security Program in NDAA

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, I urge you to cosign a letter being circulated by Representatives Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) urging the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to ensure that language critical to both the domestic maritime industry and national security is retained in the FY' 21 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Section 3511 of H.R. 6395, the House-passed NDAA, would authorize the creation of a tanker security program, consisting of 10 privately-owned, militarily-useful U.S.-flag product tankers. This program would be largely modeled after the Maritime Security Program, providing badly needed sealift capacity for fuel products while ensuring that these goods travel on vessels owned by United States citizens, crewed by American mariners and operated under the United States flag.

Today, the Department of Defense reports that it is nearly 76 fuel tankers short of its needs. Not only is this detrimental to military readiness, but it also ensures that jobs that could be performed by U.S. mariners on ships built in domestic shipyards will continue to be outsourced to foreign nations and crew. By authorizing the tanker security program in the final NDAA, Congress can simultaneously take action to create good jobs in the maritime industry that is currently facing a manpower shortage, while meeting the needs of the Department of Defense.

Given the broad scope of issues that will be considered in this year's NDAA conference process, we urge you to sign on to support the inclusion of the tanker security program, as passed by the House, in the final FY'21 NDAA legislation. We hope you will consider joining this request, and please contact Katie Bradley (Katie.Bradley@mail.house.gov) with Rep. Lowenthal or Kelsey Griswold (Kelsey.Griswold@mail.house.gov) with Rep. Smith to add your name or ask any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry I. Willis".

Larry I. Willis
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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Larry I. Willis, President / Greg Regan, Secretary-Treasurer