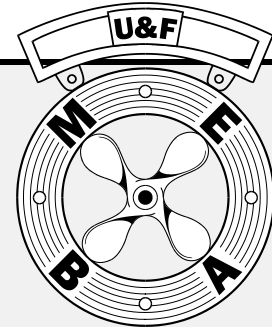


# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

*JULY 2019*



## **House Committee Advances MSP Legislation for Floor Vote**

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, the House Armed Services Committee approved the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, which would extend the life of the Maritime Security Program (MSP) for an additional 10 years through 2035. In addition, the legislation would authorize a Tanker Security Fleet that would provide a per-vessel stipend by the Department of Defense to utilize 10 U.S.-flagged commercial petroleum product tankers. The full House of Representatives began debate on the entire defense package this week. Last May, the Senate Commerce Committee approved its own legislation that would similarly reauthorize MSP through 2035 where it awaits further action in the full Senate.

## **WWII Merchant Mariner Legislation Earns House Floor Vote**

In June, legislation recognizing the contributions of World War II mariners received the requisite 290 cosponsors in the House to advance for a full vote on the House floor. Specifically, a bill sponsored by Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) and Rep. Don Young (R-AK) would authorize a Congressional Gold Medal, one of the highest civilian honors in the United States, to merchant mariners who sustained our armed forces during WWII. Having received 290 cosponsors, the bill will move to the Consensus Calendar, which hosts legislation that is typically passed unanimously by the House.

## **Coast Guard Bill Requires Cargo Preference Study by Government Accountability Office**

The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee approved legislation that would reauthorize funding for U.S. Coast Guard operations for two years. The legislation includes a provision that would require the non-partisan U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct an audit of federal agencies and organizations obligated to comply with cargo preference requirements, provide an analysis of their compliance (or non-compliance), and catalog the percentage of cargo shipped by each agency on U.S. flag vessels. The GAO would also be tasked to provide an overview of actions taken by the Maritime Administration since 2008 to enforce strict adherence to cargo preference requirements. GAO would be required to report its findings to Congress within one year of the bill's enactment.