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A broad coalition of American maritime and transportation unions has registered its strong opposition to a proposal that would promote the operation of United States-flag vessels with foreign crews. The proposal, part of a report issued by the Hudson Institute, would create a second United States-flag ship registry to allow vessel owners to bypass the hiring of American maritime workers.

As noted by the unions, “The overall report released by the Hudson Institute contains a number of recommendations that we oppose and which we believe will adversely affect the efficient implementation of existing U.S. maritime policies and the operation of U.S.-flag vessels. In addition, the proposal fails to identify solutions that would increase or incentivize the carriage of cargoes by U.S.-flag, U.S.-crewed vessels, a core tenet of ensuring an economically viable U.S. maritime industry. However, the establishment of a second U.S.-flag registry as proposed by the Hudson Institute is the most egregious proposal in the report and warrants our specific comment.”

“The United States-flag deep sea fleet is the largest segment of the maritime industry providing the trained and qualified mariners needed to meet the requirements of the Department of Defense. It is these American mariners who crew the surge and sustainment vessels called into action by the Department of Defense in time of war or other international emergency and who have never, in the history of our nation, refused to respond whenever and wherever needed by our government.

“At this time in our nation’s history it is imperative that our government act to ensure that our country has the trained and qualified mariners needed by the Department of Defense. It is irresponsible to divert U.S. taxpayer dollars to support and to otherwise encourage the operation of U.S.-flag vessels that do not provide the base of employment necessary to increase and support the U.S citizen mariner base. To do so is at best a wasteful use of U.S. taxpayer dollars and at worst, a dangerous and disregard of America’s national security requirements.

“We urge the Biden Administration and the Congress to put American maritime workers first, and to soundly reject this proposal to create a second United States-flag registry that



will be little more than a flag of convenience that has at its core the outsourcing of American maritime jobs. We instead urge Congress and the Administration to work with us to strengthen and expand the United States-flag fleet in order to create jobs for America's maritime workforce and to further enhance America's economic, homeland and military security.”

Mark Clements, Secretary-Treasurer, Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO

David Connolly, President, Sailors Union of the Pacific

Paul Doell, President, American Maritime Officers

David Heindel, President, Seafarers International Union

Don Marcus, President, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots

Anthony Poplawski, President, Marine Firemen's Union

Greg Regan, President, Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Adam Vokac, President, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association