

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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INDUSTRY URGES COAST GUARD ACTION AS DHS FUNDING LAPSE DISRUPTS OPERATIONS

A broad coalition of maritime stakeholders, including the M.E.B.A. and American Maritime Congress, has sent an urgent appeal to Coast Guard Commandant Kevin Lunday calling for key agency functions to be designated as “essential” during the ongoing Department of Homeland Security funding lapse. In the letter, the industry warns that reduced operations are already having “immediate, serious, and compounding” effects on maritime safety, commerce, and national security. The coalition is pressing the Coast Guard to fully restore staffing for Vessel Traffic Services (VTS), merchant mariner credentialing, and vessel documentation activities.

A main concern is the slowdown at the National Maritime Center, where credentialing delays are creating a growing workforce bottleneck. Since mariners must hold valid credentials to serve aboard U.S.-flag vessels, any lapse or delay effectively sidelines qualified personnel. The manning shortages are already rippling, as operators struggle to fill critical positions. The letter emphasizes that the U.S. Merchant Marine is critical to national defense, but depends on a functioning credentialing system to maintain readiness for both commercial and defense needs.

Equally pressing is the suspension or scaling back of Vessel Traffic Services, which oversee ship movements in some of the nation’s busiest waterways. The letter draws a direct comparison to the aviation sector, arguing that operating without VTS is akin to grounding air traffic controllers. Without active monitoring, the risk of collisions, groundings, and environmental incidents increases significantly, particularly in constrained channels where large vessels have limited maneuverability. Industry leaders cautioned that even a single incident in a major port could halt operations for days or weeks and trigger widespread supply chain disruptions. The coalition also highlighted mounting issues at the National Vessel Documentation Center, where reduced staffing has stalled vessel registrations, ownership transfers, and mortgage recordings. As a result, vessels awaiting documentation cannot enter service, while ongoing transactions across the maritime sector remain in limbo. The backlog is creating uncertainty not only for vessel operators but also for financial institutions involved in maritime lending.

To address these challenges, the organizations are calling on the Coast Guard to immediately designate VTS operations as essential for the protection of life and property, while classifying credentialing and

documentation functions as critical to national security and commerce. They also urged direct engagement with the Department of Homeland Security and the White House budget office to ensure maritime operations receive the same priority as aviation safety during funding gaps. Signatories to the letter offered to meet with Coast Guard officials and provide additional operational data, stressing that each day of delay deepens backlogs, heightens risk, and further disrupts the maritime transportation system.

M.E.B.A., OTHERS URGE CONGRESS TO INCLUDE MARINERS IN “NO TAX ON OT” MEASURE

The M.E.B.A. is part of a broad coalition of transportation and labor unions urging Congress to close a major gap in last year’s “No Tax on Overtime” provision — one that currently leaves most U.S. mariners without access to the benefit. In a joint letter dated April 16, 2026, M.E.B.A. and more than 20 unions called on lawmakers to support the No Tax on Overtime for All Workers Act, bipartisan legislation designed to expand overtime tax relief to millions of excluded workers. Under the current tax code, many hourly workers can deduct up to \$25,000 in premium pay earned via overtime annually. However, the law relies on a narrow definition of overtime rooted in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which excludes most transportation workers — including those in the maritime industry.

As a result, mariners, along with airline, rail, and trucking workers, are unable to claim the deduction despite often working extensive overtime under union contracts or industry-specific labor rules. The proposed legislation would correct this disparity by broadening the definition of overtime for tax purposes, ensuring that all similarly situated workers, regardless of industry, are eligible for the deduction. The M.E.B.A. and other letter signatories emphasized that the fix would deliver meaningful, working-class tax relief while recognizing the long hours required of transportation workers. The coalition is now pressing lawmakers to cosponsor and advance the legislation (H.R. 5475/S. 4310), framing it as a straightforward correction to ensure fairness across industries. The letter has been posted on the M.E.B.A. site on the home page (www.mebaunion.org).

ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR POSITIONS AVAILABLE AT CMES

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School (CMES) is currently accepting resumes for adjunct instructor positions and is seeking qualified Deck and Engineering officers who hold, or have previously held, a valid U.S. Coast Guard license. These positions offer a meaningful way to contribute to the industry by helping to train and mentor the next generation of mariners. CMES provides support throughout the credentialing and training process for those transitioning into an instructional role. Positions are available on a flexible basis, with both part-time and full-time opportunities that can be scheduled around your availability. The pay is competitive, and housing and transportation are provided.

If you are committed to strengthening the M.E.B.A. workforce and passing on your knowledge and experience, we encourage you to submit your resume. They should be submitted via email to resume@mebaschool.org, or directly to CMES Director of Academics Sylvan Haas at shaas@mebaschool.org.

TREASURY TARGETS IRANIAN SHADOW FLEET WITH NEW SANCTIONS

The U.S. Department of the Treasury has expanded its crackdown on Iran’s illicit oil trade, announcing new sanctions against more than two dozen individuals, companies, and vessels tied to a network controlled by Mohammad Hossein Shamkhani. The shipping network connected to the Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps has transported millions of barrels of oil on its behalf, making it a central focus of the White House campaign targeting Iran's energy sector. In its latest action, the Treasury Department imposed sanctions on nine vessels along with more than a dozen companies and individuals connected to the Shamkhani operation. The latest action builds on earlier measures taken in 2025, when the network was first identified as a major conduit for illicit trade. Officials warned that financial institutions worldwide could face secondary sanctions if they continue to support such operations.

Officials said the Shamkhani network relied on a web of front companies, including shipping, consulting, and administrative firms, to mask its activities and maintain the appearance of legitimate business operations. These entities enabled the movement of sanctioned oil while helping shield the broader network from scrutiny. The action, taken under existing U.S. sanctions authorities, marks the latest step in a broader effort to target Iran's oil sector and associated financial channels. Since the renewed pressure campaign began, the Treasury Department has sanctioned more than 1,000 individuals, vessels, and aircraft linked to Iran's oil trade and proxy financing networks.

MARYLAND SETTLES CLAIMS AGAINST DALI OWNER/OPERATOR

The State of Maryland reached a settlement in principle with Grace Ocean Private Limited and Synergy Marine Pte Ltd., the owner and operator of the M/V DALI, resolving a portion of the State's claims arising from the cargo ship's March 26, 2024 allision with the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Settlement details have not been released. The settlement doesn't resolve claims the State may have against the shipbuilder, Hyundai.

The State's claims, filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland in September 2024, alleged that the disaster was the result of negligence, mismanagement, and the reckless operation of a vessel that was not seaworthy and should never have left port. The State sought damages on behalf of its agencies for the destruction of the bridge, harm to the Patapsco River and surrounding environment, lost revenues, and the wide-ranging economic losses sustained by Maryland and its residents. The latest agreement follows a \$350 million deal reached with the state's insurer and an earlier \$101 million settlement with the federal government in October 2024 tied to debris removal and efforts to restore port operations after the bridge collapse. Meanwhile, over 60 claimants, organized into four groups, are set to have their cases heard in court starting in June.

"For two years, Maryland workers, families, and communities have carried the weight of a disaster that should never have happened. The DALI's crash into the Key Bridge disrupted the Port of Baltimore, devastated livelihoods, and sent economic shockwaves across our State that are still being felt today," said Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown. "Our work is not finished, but this settlement is an important step toward making Maryland whole."

PATRIOTS' DAY; TITANIC COMMEMORATION; BAD NIGHT AT THE THEATER

The M.E.B.A. Union hall in Boston will be closed on Monday, April 20 for Patriots' Day. Patriots' Day is a state holiday in Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut and North Dakota. It is observed on the third Monday in April in those states and commemorates the Revolutionary War battles of Lexington, Concord and Menotomy, the first major military action of the American Revolutionary War. The actual battles occurred on April 19, 1775. Though independence was declared by the 13 Colonies the next year in July of 1776, it was not officially achieved until the Treaty of Paris, signed on September

3, 1783. All other M.E.B.A. offices and halls will be open during their normal operating hours on Monday.

Yesterday, (April 15) commemorated another historic day in history – the sinking of the RMS TITANIC 114 years ago. Over the course of the night from April 14-15, 1912, the TITANIC struck an iceberg and sank into the freezing depths of the Atlantic Ocean. Over 1500 people lost their lives on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York, causing the incident to become the one of the biggest and deadliest peacetime maritime disasters in history. The TITANIC was one of three Olympic class ocean liners built for and operated by the White Star Line. She was one of the largest ships sailing at that time. The company boosted her as being “designed to be unsinkable.” A claim that proved deadly as the vessel only had enough lifeboats to carry about half of her passengers. Almost 700 crewmembers lost their lives that night, including all 25 engineers. While the tragedy of the sinking was immense, it spurred drastic changes and improvement to regulations in the maritime industry, including the 1914 creation of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

April 15 also marked the 161st anniversary of the death of Abraham Lincoln, shot by Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth the night before at Washington D.C.’s Ford’s Theatre during a performance of *Our American Cousin*. The National Park Service oversaw a ceremonial wreath-laying on Wednesday morning at 7:22 a.m. (the time of his death) at the Peterson House where Lincoln passed away, across the street from the theater.

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*

Monday, May 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, May 5 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**

Wednesday, May 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, May 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, May 8 – **Honolulu@1100**

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***M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.***

The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; mebahq@mebaunion.org. Website: www.mebaunion.org For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or www.mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org