

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*  
**M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**  
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## **WAITING GAME ON MSC, ARMY CORPS WAIVERS; FLEET MEMBERS URGED TO ENROLL IN M.E.B.A. PAY PORTAL**

The fate of a pair of waivers to exempt Department of Defense Government Fleet unions from a White House Executive Order is still pending at this hour. The Military Sealift Command (MSC) and Army Corps of Engineers filed waiver applications attempting to exempt their Civilian Mariners (CIVMARS) from Executive Order 14251. The March 27<sup>th</sup> White House directive, issued under national security justifications, removes collective bargaining rights and union protections for employees across numerous federal agencies including DOD.

CIVMARS working for these fleets are currently represented by several maritime unions including M.E.B.A., MM&P, and SIU. The M.E.B.A. alone has membership exceeding 500 dues-paying mariners in these government fleets. It's worth noting that mariners employed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which falls under the Commerce Department's jurisdiction, remain unaffected by this Executive Order.

Both the MSC and Army Corps leadership have acknowledged the valuable contribution their unions make toward operational readiness and workforce stability, prompting their waiver requests to maintain union recognition within those fleets. Again, the outcome of these requests remains uncertain. Recently, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) discontinued processing union dues through payroll deductions. Even with successful waivers, the payroll deduction system for union dues is unlikely to be reinstated soon.

M.E.B.A. maintains its status as the recognized representative for Engineering Officers in both fleets, and contract protections remain intact. Should the waiver applications fail, M.E.B.A. will provide alternative options for Government Fleet mariners to retain their membership.

*MSC and Army Corps members are urged to maintain their good standing by using M.E.B.A.'s online payment portal at <https://meba.workingsystems.com>. The Membership Department at Headquarters can provide assistance with any technical issues by phone at (202) 638-5355 or via email at [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org). Those enrolling in the M.E.B.A. Payment Portal must have an email address on file with Headquarters that correlates to their payment portal i.d., so make sure the HQ records match. A PDF guide for using the payment*

*portal is being distributed to affected members interested in setting up automatic dues payments.*

*Payments can also be made in person at any M.E.B.A. Union hall or office. To ensure continuity, members are advised to complete payments through the fourth quarter. For additional information, affected members should check in with M.E.B.A. Government Fleet Representative Craig Moran at the Norfolk Union hall at (757) 440-1820 or [govtfleet@mebaunion.org](mailto:govtfleet@mebaunion.org). Assistant Representative Ola Lassley can be reached at the same number or via email at [Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org](mailto:Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org).*

## **USTR ISSUES MODIFIED MEASURES TO MITIGATE CHINA'S MARITIME CONTROL**

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative initiated Section 301 measures late last week designed to strengthen American shipbuilding and counter China's maritime practices. Under the Trade Act, Section 301 establishes a process allowing stakeholders to request USTR investigations into foreign government actions and seek appropriate remedies. Section 301(b) specifically addresses foreign practices that unreasonably burden U.S. commerce. The newly revised measures are somewhat softer than the USTR proposal originally released in February and take into account some of the concerns aired by industry stakeholders that worried of potential supply chain disruptions.

M.E.B.A. has been supportive of the USTR's proposal to restrict the influence of Chinese-built vessels and Chinese operators in U.S. maritime trade. The Union noted that carefully implemented countermeasures could help stimulate significant investment in the American maritime industrial base, and revive shipbuilding and fleet expansion efforts within the United States.

The USTR stated that the measures would be implemented in two phases: For the first 180 days the applicable fees will be set at \$0.

(1) In the first phase, after 180 days: Fees on vessel owners and operators of China based on net tonnage per U.S. voyage, increasing incrementally over the following years; Fees on operators of Chinese-built ships based on net tonnage or containers, increasing incrementally over the following years; and To incentivize U.S.-built car carrier vessels, fees on foreign-built car carrier vessels based on their capacity.

(2) The second phase actions will not take place for 3 years: To incentivize U.S.-built liquefied natural gas (LNG) vessels, limited restrictions on transporting LNG via foreign vessels. These restrictions will increase incrementally over 22 years. In addition, USTR is seeking public comments on the proposed tariffs on ship-to-shore cranes and other cargo handling equipment, in line with the President's Maritime Executive Order.

## **ITF REMEMBERS POPE FRANCIS AS AN ALLY TO WORKERS**

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) joined working people around the world in mourning the passing of Pope Francis who they called "a courageous voice for justice, dignity, and peace." Pope Francis died on Monday at the age of 88. M.E.B.A. is a member organization of the ITF, a global union federation fighting for the rights, equality and justice of almost 20 million working men and women in the transport sector around the world.

ITF said Pope Francis “was not only a spiritual leader but a steadfast ally to the world’s workers. From his native Argentina to the global stage, he stood with trade unions and their members, defending the rights of working people to organize, to bargain collectively, and to live free from exploitation.”

The ITF was privileged to work with Pope Francis and the Vatican on initiatives to advance decent work, confront exploitation, and uphold the dignity of workers across global supply chains. He welcomed ITF delegations to the Vatican for two landmark forums – first in 2019, where trade unions, employers, and the Church came together in an unprecedented alliance to push for urgent reform of global supply chains and stronger protections for workers. Then again in 2022, to drive action on technology, climate justice, human trafficking, corruption, and corporate accountability. In both, the Pope made clear: workers’ rights and the fight against modern slavery are moral imperatives, and the global economy must serve people – not profits.

ITF President Paddy Crumlin reflected on the power of the partnership between the Vatican and the ITF: “In every encounter, Pope Francis reminded us that the fight for workers’ rights is a fight for human rights. He urged us to keep challenging the structures that devalue labour and reward greed. He gave legitimacy and urgency to our shared struggle – and did so with an unwavering commitment to peace, solidarity, and the common good. We are proud to have stood beside him.”

### **FRC COMPLETES REVIEW, FORWARDS REPORT**

A six-person rank-and-file Financial Review Committee spent three days at M.E.B.A. Headquarters this week scrutinizing the Union’s financial records for calendar year 2024. The FRC was created as a Democratic safeguard adopted by the M.E.B.A. in the mid-1990s to examine the Union’s finances from the previous year.

This year, the Committee was made up of the following six members: Steven Walker (Seattle) who served as Chairman, Joe Ajar (NY/NJ), Sergio Gratta (Tampa), Matt Haskell (Norfolk), John Fountas (Oakland) and Brandon Stewart (Houston).

The FRC members signed off on a report that will be made available at the halls and voted upon by members at the regular May membership meetings. Many thanks for their hard work this week and for participating in this important democratic process.

### **INCIDENTS IN SINGAPORE STRAITS FUELED PIRACY SPIKE IN 2025**

The ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has revealed a rise in global piracy and armed robbery incidents in the first quarter of 2025 – driven by a spike of incidents in the Singapore Straits. A total of 45 cases of piracy and armed robbery against ships were recorded in the first three months of 2025 – an almost 35 percent increase compared to the same period in 2024. Of the incidents reported, 37 vessels were boarded, four were hijacked and four had attempted attacks. The threat to crew safety remains high with 37 crew members taken hostage, 13 kidnapped, two threatened and one injured.

The Q1 report highlights a spike in recorded incidents in the Singapore Straits as 27 incidents were reported from vessels transiting these waters compared to seven for the same period in 2024. While most incidents were considered low-level opportunistic crimes, crew members were at great risk with guns reported in 14 incidents. In 2024, guns were reported in 26 incidents globally. Ten crew members were taken hostage in six separate incidents, two were threatened and one was reported injured.

Ninety-two percent of all vessels targeted in the Singapore Straits were successfully boarded, including nine bulk carriers and tankers over 100,000 deadweight tonnage in size.

Although the number of reported incidents within the Gulf of Guinea waters and adjoining littoral states continues to be at its lowest in nearly two decades, the IMB urges continued caution as crew members remain at risk. All 13 kidnapped crew were reported in these waters in two separate attacks – with a total of six incidents reported in the first quarter of the year. In March, pirates hijacked a bitumen tanker southeast of Santo Antonio, in Sao Tome and Principe, kidnapping 10 crew members – while a fishing vessel south of Accra, Ghana, was boarded by armed pirates who kidnapped three crew members. In addition, between February 7 and March 16, 2025, two fishing vessels and a dhow were hijacked off the coast of Somalia. In these incidents, 26 crew members were taken hostage, demonstrating the continued capabilities of Somali pirates. Reports indicate all crew have been released along with the vessels.

### **GET YOUR SPOT FOR CAA-M.E.B.A. PICNIC/150<sup>th</sup> CELEBRATION**

The entire M.E.B.A. membership, active and retired, and especially Calhoon graduates, are invited to the Calhoon Alumni Association (CAA) Reunion scheduled for June 27-29 at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. The weekend will also include a celebration of the M.E.B.A.'s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Union is in its 150<sup>th</sup> year as of February 23 and there will be much rejoicing. Information, event fees, and registration forms are on the CMES website located at [www.mebaschool.org](http://www.mebaschool.org). Look for the CAA page link.

The weekend kicks off with the traditional Golf Tournament on Friday, June 27 at 1000. There will be an evening muster at the Calhoon Saloon later that evening. The party on the Manor House Lawn will take place all day Saturday, June 28. This is a great family event that you should be sure to sign up for. Direct any questions to [caa@mebaschool.org](mailto:caa@mebaschool.org) and check out the School website to get the complete lowdown. Take this opportunity to spread the word throughout the M.E.B.A. world as well as to past Calhoon School cadets, instructors, shipmates, friends, and families.

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

Monday, May 5 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, May 6 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, May 7 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mehq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mehq@mebaunion.org)**

Thursday, May 8 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, May 9 – **Honolulu@1100**

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



***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.***