

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*  
**M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**  
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## **EXECUTIVE ORDER JEOPARDIZES M.E.B.A. GOVERNMENT FLEET**

Without an exemption, about five hundred M.E.B.A. members sailing in the Government Fleet will be stripped of their collective bargaining rights following the issuance of a March 27<sup>th</sup> Executive Order. The Order directs multiple federal agencies, including the Department of Defense, to terminate collective bargaining with federal unions. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provided directives instructing agencies to eliminate union rights, void union contracts, and discontinue grievance procedures.

Civilian Mariners in the Military Sealift Command and Army Corps of Engineers fleets, falling under DOD, are represented by M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU. M.E.B.A. Government Fleet mariners sailing for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which is part of the Commerce Department, were not subject to the March 27<sup>th</sup> Executive Order.

A White House fact sheet issued on Thursday stated, "President Trump supports constructive partnerships with unions who work with him. He will not tolerate mass obstruction that jeopardizes his ability to manage agencies with vital national security missions." Attorney General Pam Bondi noted that, "...we are aggressively protecting President Trump's efforts to ensure unions no longer interfere in the national security functions of the government."

A fleet of MSC government-owned military auxiliary vessels provides logistics and support for U.S. Navy at-sea missions. CIVMAR-crewed ships resupply Navy vessels with food, fuel, ammunition and stores through underway replenishments in order to sustain strategic missions around the globe. CIVMARs are the backbone of our at-sea warfighting capability. The MSC fleet recently was forced to sideline almost 20 vessels because a CIVMAR shortage won't allow the Command to operate at full strength. Removing M.E.B.A. representation for MSC mariners would only exacerbate their mariner shortage and weaken readiness.

Mariners in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fleet carry out continuous missions to develop, maintain, and support the Nation's vital port and waterways infrastructure needs.

As of now, M.E.B.A.'s existing agreements with MSC and the Army Corps remain in effect. If an exemption for the fleets is not issued, it would subjugate a loyal and vital workforce, peel back

protections for mariners and transform hardworking employees into at-will workers who can be fired for any reason.

Several lawsuits have already been filed against the Order including the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU).

National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM) President Randy Erwin said, “Make no mistake – this is the biggest assault on collective bargaining rights we have ever seen in this country. More than one million federal workers will lose their constitutionally protected freedom to form and join a union if this executive order is implemented.” AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler called the Order “the very definition of union-busting.”

A statement from the three unions that represent Civilian Mariners was sent out to the MSC and Army Corps fleets this week as the situation remains fluid:

“Greetings, SIU, MEBA, MM&P Bargaining Unit Members,

On 27MAR25, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order (EO) to end collective bargaining with Federal unions representing DOD workers due to national security concerns. The EO directs agencies to follow an implementation process to terminate existing collective bargaining agreements (CBA).

We have NOT been notified by any of our federal employers that they have terminated our existing CBA. We retain recognition and will continue to represent our members well.

At no point in history have CIVMARS been excluded from the Federal Labor Relations Act or been precluded from union representation on the grounds that such representation poses a risk to national security. MSC’s primary function is to deliver cargo, not to perform “intelligence, counterintelligence, investigative, or national security work” as set out in the EO. We believe that the EO should not apply to CIVMARS since MSC engages in transportation and CIVMARS have never posed a risk to national security. On the contrary, dedicated CIVMARS who make daily sacrifices in support of our great nation have always supported our nation’s sealift functions while being represented by Unions.

Therefore, we intend to take whatever action is needed to maintain our Union recognition for our CIVMAR workforce. We will continue to keep you apprised of any status changes as we move forward.”

## **BIPARTISAN BILL LAUNCHED TO RESTORE UNION RIGHTS FOR FEDERAL WORKERS**

Congressmen Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1) and Jared Golden (D-ME-2) joined together to introduce the “Protect America’s Workforce Act,” bipartisan legislation aimed at restoring collective bargaining rights for unionized federal employees. The legislation would reverse the March 27<sup>th</sup> Executive Order titled “Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs” which aims to eliminate collective bargaining rights across multiple federal agencies. Specifically, the order targeted employees in the Departments of Defense, State, Veterans Affairs, Justice, and Energy, as well as certain employees in the Departments of Homeland Security, Treasury, Health and Human Services, Interior,

and Agriculture. In total, the order impacted roughly 67% of the federal workforce, according to independent reports.

“We can defend our national security without silencing those who serve it. Efficiency and fairness are not mutually exclusive—and this legislation ensures we uphold both,” said Rep. Fitzpatrick.

“In his order, President Trump said that federal workers’ rights are incompatible with national security. He is wrong. Union workers make America stronger every single day...,” said Rep. Golden. “Throughout our history, unions have ensured workers got their fair share of this nation’s prosperity. Unions built our middle class, and are key to strengthening its future. We cannot have a government that undermines workers’ rights.”

### **JESSE CALHOON TO BE HONORED ON FRIDAY**

M.E.B.A. Union halls will be closed tomorrow, Friday, April 4, to honor longtime M.E.B.A. President Jesse Calhoon on the occasion of his birthday. The son of a fisherman, Jesse started out as a coal passer in Norfolk, VA at the age of 16. By 1943, he started work as fireman, then oiler and set sail in support of the allied effort to defeat Hitler. Following the war and his membership with the M.E.B.A., Calhoon ascended within the ranks. He started in Norfolk Local 11 as Business Manager (the precursor to Branch Agent), before becoming National M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer in 1959.

In February 1963, when M.E.B.A. President Edwin Altman resigned to join the American Maritime Association, Calhoon was elected to fill the unexpired term. His service as M.E.B.A.’s top executive spanned six U.S. presidencies. Throughout Jesse’s presidency, he used his political savvy coupled with shrewd negotiating to win unprecedented gains for members and safeguard American maritime jobs at large. He vigorously fought for legislation to protect thousands of U.S. mariner jobs and helped ensure the continued viability of the U.S. maritime industry.

Among many other achievements under Calhoon’s administration, the Union established the training school which bears his name, merged the deep-sea districts, Pacific Coast District and District 1 into a single all coast unit, and transformed M.E.B.A.’s pension plan into the best in the maritime industry. Born on April 4, 1923, Jesse made his final voyage on October 22, 2013 at the age of 90.

This is the fourth year that the occasion has been celebrated as a holiday by the M.E.B.A. It had been informally observed for a decade before that. The ILWU and ILA, among others, also have union-specific observances honoring their labor leaders (Harry Bridges, Teddy Gleason, etc.) and M.E.B.A. members take pride that the nation’s oldest and finest maritime union recognizes its modern-day patriarch in similar fashion.

### **M.E.B.A. ISSUES SUPPORT FOR MOLINARO AT FTA**

The M.E.B.A. attended a confirmation hearing last week in support of Marc Molinaro to be the next Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, a federal agency that oversees and provides funding for public transportation systems, including ferries, across the U.S. The Union has had a great working relationship with Molinaro who served a term in Congress beginning in 2022, and who has been a stalwart on M.E.B.A. issues.

The M.E.B.A. is part of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) which officially announced its strong support for the nomination in a letter sent to the Senate Banking Committee.

TTD President Greg Regan highlighted Molinaro's impressive record on transportation issues during his two years in Congress and cited his consistent advocacy for transportation workers' safety, health, and livelihoods. "He rolled up his sleeves on behalf of working people by leading or signing his name to many worker-centered and safety-centered legislative efforts," Regan stated in the letter. The TTD, which represents millions of transportation workers nationwide, emphasized the critical importance of having an FTA Administrator who will take a "thoughtful and pragmatic approach to addressing the needs of transportation workers and their unions...as he administers FTA programs and oversees the regulatory process." The letter urged Senate Banking Committee members to advance Molinaro's nomination and for Senate leadership to bring it promptly to the floor for confirmation.

### **UNION PLUS "EXPLORE 2025" SWEEPSTAKES**

M.E.B.A. members, retirees and their families - as well as members of affiliated M.E.B.A. unions - are eligible to take part in the 2025 Union Plus "Explore 2025" Sweepstakes, that could net you fabulous prizes. Explore 2025 features three sweepstakes and four social media challenges throughout the year to help raise awareness about travel benefits that are exclusively available to union members and their families. M.E.B.A. is enrolled in dozens of moneysaving Union Plus programs ranging from life insurance to financing children's educations.

The first sweepstakes is running now through April 18. The "Union Plus America's Iconic Beaches Sweepstakes" will award a \$5,000 cash prize AND a 3 to 5-night stay worth up to \$2,000 at a property available through the Union Plus Hotel Discounts Program. There is no purchase necessary. The sweepstakes is not open to the general public. The sweepstakes ends on April 18 and will be followed by the "Explore America's Great Highways and Byways" Contest. There will be something all year long! For official rules and the online form to enter visit [www.unionplus.org/explore](http://www.unionplus.org/explore).

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

Monday, April 7 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, April 8 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, April 9 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

Thursday, April 10 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, April 11 – **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.***

*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](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). Website: [www.mebaunion.org](http://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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram. The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or [www.mebaschool.org](http://www.mebaschool.org). M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or [www.mebaplans.org](http://www.mebaplans.org)*