

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## **M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**

*The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"*  
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### **MSP NEEDS ATTENTION TO MAINTAIN READINESS, CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS TOLD**

"Absent significant action by Congress, vessels enrolled in the Maritime Security Program are facing protracted lay-up, and the American mariners who crew these vessels are facing long-term unemployment," Congressional leaders were told in a letter dispatched this week. In the letter, USA Maritime pointed out that the pandemic has brutalized the global shipping trades and, as a consequence, commercial sealift readiness capability provided by MSP vessels could be affected. USA Maritime is a coalition of maritime unions, associations and shipping companies – including the M.E.B.A. and American Maritime Congress – fighting for the U.S. Merchant Marine.

"The COVID-19 emergency has essentially stopped the global commercial seaborne trade and halted most U.S. military and civilian government cargo on which the U.S. maritime industry largely depends," the letter states. "This situation, which shows no realistic signs of ending any time in the immediate future, puts at severe risk the ongoing ability of our industry to provide the sealift readiness capability and surge support relied upon by the Department of Defense..."

Letter signatories ask that Congressional leaders look to cement the power of the MSP throughout the pandemic and beyond, and secure the program to continue serving its vital role for our economic and national security. USA Maritime says Congress can achieve this by supporting the militarily-useful commercial vessels of the MSP with an emergency relief payment as part of its next package to offset the damaging effects of the coronavirus on our nation's health and economy. The letter urges Congress "to authorize and appropriate \$109.8 million to provide \$1.83 million to each MSP vessel for the period April 1, 2020 to the end of the current fiscal year, as well as to authorize \$1.82 million per vessel with a total authorization of \$109 million for the period October 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 to be appropriated as needed."

They say that without such an infusion during these difficult times, it will be problematic for program vessels to remain in a necessary state of readiness to meet national security challenges, and scores of American mariners will find themselves shoreside and unemployed.

The letter has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website located at [www.mcbaunion.org](http://www.mcbaunion.org)

## **REP. LURIA VOICES SUPPORT FOR U.S. MARINERS & NEED TO REINFORCE MSP**

U.S.-flag shipping proponent Elaine Luria, a House Member representing Virginia's Hampton Roads area, reinforced the need to fortify the Maritime Security Program to withstand the pandemic and retain its viability as a critical national security asset. She penned a letter sent to House and Senate leaders urging congressional leadership to support MSP participants by encouraging all government-generated cargoes to have 100% US- flag cargo preference and to reject Jones Act waivers during the pandemic. She also recommended economic relief for operators to cover costs associated with maintaining their vessels and keeping crews employed.

Congresswoman Luria also advocated for COVID-19 testing kits for mariners aboard U.S.-flag vessels and allowing maritime union vocational training facilities to be eligible for assistance under the Paycheck Protection Program. Rep. Luria is the Vice-Chair on the Armed Services' Seapower Subcommittee and also sits on the Military Personnel Subcommittee. She is a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee as well.

The letter has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website accessed at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)

## **REPORT: JONES ACT BLOCKS CHINA'S PLAN FOR GLOBAL DOMINATION**

Frontiers of Freedom, a Virginia-based policy group that focuses on national security issues, has published a report – authored by former U.S. Congressman Ernest Istook, that details the Jones Act's crucial role in blocking China's hoped-for expansion into U.S. domestic waters. The report, entitled "The Jones Act Blocks China's Plan for Global Domination," points out that the 100-year old statute helps preserve American values and national interests by helping to keep nations like China with dreams of dominating global shipping "at bay."

Istook had harsh words for Jones Act critics who seem to argue that "U.S. law should only consider money." He said those people are forgetting that China is implementing its plan to control global commerce with domination of the world's oceans. A Jones Act repeal, he said, "would sacrifice America's borders, security and interests as heavily-subsidized foreign shipping would invade domestic waters."

Displaying his disdain for anti-Jones Act forces that he says are working against America's best interests, he noted, "According to the infamous quote attributed to Vladimir Lenin, 'capitalists would eagerly sell rope to the communists and then be hung by that rope.'"

To read the full report, visit [www.ff.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Jones-Act-White-Paper-4-7-2020.pdf](http://www.ff.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Jones-Act-White-Paper-4-7-2020.pdf)

## **OSHA COMPLAINTS FILED TO GET PROTECTIONS FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS**

Public employees and health care workers in 10 states have filed 40 Occupational Safety and Health Administration complaints to highlight the agency's reluctance to investigate employers placing frontline workers at grave risk of infection and death from the coronavirus. There are currently no enforceable OSHA standards compelling employers to protect workers from the virus that has claimed more than 60,000 American lives.

The American Federation of Teachers, which represents educators, public employees and health care professionals among others, said that OSHA has failed to step up to protect workers on the job. The

complaints detail a disturbing rash of events, including one instance when hospital cleaning employees were not told when a room had a COVID-19 patient, and another in which management refused to allow staff to wear protective masks.

“In this time of pandemic, when one in five COVID-19 cases are frontline workers, it’s immoral that OSHA is refusing to issue and enforce guidelines to protect the safety and health of employees and their patients,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten. “Because the virus is so contagious, workers are at risk every moment. We need to protect the protectors—that means getting them PPE but also listening to those with the frontline knowledge to tackle this disease. By ignoring workers, employers are needlessly putting more lives on the line, and for that they must be condemned.”

Along with labor unions and allies nationwide, the AFT has launched a petition located at [https://actionnetwork.org/letters/make-osha-protect-frontline-workers?source=direct\\_link&](https://actionnetwork.org/letters/make-osha-protect-frontline-workers?source=direct_link&) demanding OSHA immediately issue an emergency temporary standard (ETS) to protect workers from COVID-19 and future infectious agents. (Supporters can also tweet #DoYourJobOSHA

The petition supports the passage of H.R. 6559, the COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act of 2020, a bill introduced by Rep. Robert C. Scott (D-Va.). This bill would force OSHA to issue an ETS within seven days; mandate government tracking and investigation of work-related COVID-19 infections; and forbid retaliation against nurses and healthcare professionals for reporting infection-control problems or using non-employer-issued personal protective equipment when an adequate employer supply is not available.

### **TTD: CRISIS REMINDS US THAT SAFE WORK PLACES MUST BE FOUGHT FOR**

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) President Larry Willis said that the failure of the federal government to keep frontline workers safe has prompted the labor movement to step up, once again, to fight for the rights, safety, and livelihoods of America’s working families. The M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents 32 unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries.

Willis noted, “despite their increased risk of exposure, too many transit, rail, aviation, maritime, and port workers — all who are deemed essential — still do not have the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need to stay safe. Across our transportation system, lack of clear, federal guidance has created a patchwork response that varies from company to company and agency to agency, leaving too many workers exposed and fearful.”

Willis said that labor is holding the government’s feet to the fire by insisting that the Labor and Transportation Departments step up and better protect frontline workers. TTD has called for the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) and enforce sector-specific requirements. “Every worker deserves to be safe on the job,” said Willis. “But as the Coronavirus crisis is making clear, safe workplaces don’t just happen — they are fought for. Transportation labor is proud to do our part to keep frontline workers safe — now and always.”

### **UNION-MADE MOTHER’S DAY**

Mother’s Day is right around the corner (Sunday, May 10). Make sure you show mom how much you appreciate her. Show mom she’s the best with these union-made presents. These union products include those made by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International

Union (BCTGM), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), and the United Farm Workers of America (UFW).

**Union-Made Wines** - Almaden; André; Arbor Mist; Barrelli Creek; Bartles & Jaymes; Black Box; Boone's Farm; C.K. Mondavi; Carlo Rossi; Charles Krug; Chateau Ste; Columbia Crest; Cook's California Champagne; Corbett Canyon; Dubonnet; Fairbanks; Franzia; Gallo Estate; J. Roget; Lejon Vermouth; Livingston Cellars; MD 20/20; Michelle; Mission Bell; Peter Vella; Rancho Zabaco; Robert Mondavi; Seagram's Escapes; Sheffield Cellars; St. Supery; **Chocolate Treats** - Boyer Brothers Dark Chocolate Mall Cups; Frankford Hallow, Molded-filled, and Solid Chocolate; Ghirardelli all filled and non-filled squares; Hershey's chocolate bars; Nestlé Treasures; Pearson's Chocolate Mints; Russell Stover Boxed Candies; Sconza Chocolate Covered Fruit and Jordanetts; See's Candies Chocolate Assortment. **Health & Beauty Products** - Dove Beauty Bar and skin care; Caress skin care; L'Oréal Paris; Revlon. **Flowers** - Save 30% on Teleflora Flowers and Gift Baskets for Mother's Day!

### UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO

In addition to the weekly *Telex Times* and our website, the Union continues to keep members informed through communications to our Union halls and offices - as well as by mass emails sent to members, applicants and retirees. If you want to ensure that you are part of the contact list receiving future updates, you must have a valid email address on file with M.E.B.A. Headquarters. M.E.B.A. also has contacted members by text message for those who have accurate cell phone information on file with HQ.

You can update all your current info including mailing address using the address change form available on the M.E.B.A. website. It can be found at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org) under the "Members" tab or in the "Documents & Member Notices" section. Alternatively, you can send your updated information to Renee Bowman at HQ by mail, fax at (202) 638-5369, or e-mail at [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org) Since the M.E.B.A. Plans office in Baltimore and Headquarters databases are NOT linked, you must also forward a signed change of address form to the Plans Office if you wish to update your information with them.

### ONLINE MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN MAY

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;  
Thursday, May 7 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;  
Monday, May 8 – Honolulu@1100.

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*The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven 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). Visit us on Facebook. 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.*