

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
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PROTECT AMERICA'S WORKFORCE ACT PASSES HOUSE

A bill to reverse a Trump Executive Order stripping union rights from federal workers passed the House Floor 231-195 on Thursday, though prospects for Senate passage appear murky. 20 Republicans joined Democrats to pass the Protect America's Workforce Act (PAWA), legislation fronted by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1) and Jared Golden (D-ME-2).

The legislation seeks to reverse the Presidential Executive Order titled "Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs" which aimed to eliminate collective bargaining rights across multiple federal agencies. Specifically, the Executive Order targeted federal employees - including removing M.E.B.A. mariners sailing in the Military Sealift Command and Army Corps fleets of their collective bargaining rights - on the auspices of "enhancing the national security of the United States." In total, the order impacted roughly 67% of the federal workforce, according to independent reports.

The 20 House Republicans who sided with workers and all Democrats to pass the bill included Reps. Don Bacon (NE-2), Mike Bost (Ill-12), Rob Bresnahan (PA-8), Gabe Evans (CO-8), Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-1), Andrew Garbarino (NY-2), David Joyce (Ohio-14), Tom Kean (NJ-7), Nick LaLota (NY-1), Mike Lawler (NY-17), Ryan Mackenzie (PA-7), Nicole Malliotakis (NY-11), Mariannette Miller-Meeks (Iowa-1), Zach Nunn (Iowa-3), Chris Smith (NJ-4), Pete Stauber (Minn.-8), Mike Turner (Ohio-10), David Valadao (CA-22), Jeff Van Drew (NJ-2) and Derrick Van Orden (WI-3).

"The labor movement fought back against the largest act of union-busting in American history by doing what we do best: organizing," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. "We commend Reps. Golden and Fitzpatrick for leading us to a vote on the Protect America's Workforce Act and urge every lawmaker to support this bill. Working people built a bipartisan coalition to restore union rights to federal workers in the face of unprecedented attacks on our freedoms and livelihoods."

At this juncture, it will be an uphill battle in the Senate for a comparable bill to survive. Should it succeed in the upper chamber, the President can exercise his veto power.

U.S. SEIZURE OF OIL TANKER BRINGS ATTENTION TO SHADOW FLEETS

The U.S. seizure of an oil tanker off the coast of Venezuelan has brought national awareness to global shadow fleets - vessels operating under opaque ownership structures involved in sanction-prone trade and deceptive practices.

The 310,000 dwt SKIPPER (ex-ADISA) was seized by the U.S. Navy on Wednesday. Fully laden with Venezuelan oil, the ship had been under U.S. sanctions for trading oil with Iran. Sources indicate its AIS had been dark for several days, typical for shadow fleet ships when approaching loading areas. The vessel was operating under a fraudulent Guyanese flag. The tanker is owned by a Nigerian-based company.

Reports indicate that the so-called global shadow fleet comprises 1,423 tankers, with 921 of them currently under U.S., U.K., or European sanctions. These ships are generally older, operate under murky ownership structures, and lack the high-level insurance coverage required by major oil companies and many international ports. The shadow fleet has grown in recent years as nations under U.S. and EU sanctions seek ways to continue exporting oil and other goods without relying on Western insurers, ports, or financial systems. According to shipping sources, a number of vessel owners, operators, and agents are now weighing whether to depart Venezuelan waters as originally scheduled, wary of the evolving risk landscape.

The ITF continues to call for international enforcement of UNCLOS Article 91, which mandates a “genuine link” between a vessel and its flag state. Without it, Flags of Convenience – and the shadow fleets they enable – will remain a dangerous loophole in the global maritime system.

EFFORT TO TURN BACK ATTACK ON UNION RIGHTS DERAILED IN NDAA

House negotiators quietly removed a bipartisan measure from an annual Defense bill that was intended to safeguard collective bargaining rights for civilian employees at the Defense Department, following pushback from Senate Republicans wary of confronting President Trump over his efforts to curtail federal unions.

The provision, approved by the House Armed Services Committee last July, would have blocked the Pentagon from using fiscal year 2026 funds to carry out Trump’s March Executive Order eliminating bargaining rights for roughly two-thirds of federal workers. That language survived the full House vote in September, when the chamber passed its version of the National Defense Authorization Act. However, when the House Rules Committee released the final compromise draft of the must-pass defense bill on Sunday, the proposal was notably absent.

Reportedly, 16 House Republicans had urged the Senate to keep the measure, but only Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), ultimately pushed for its retention. The effort had represented the most direct and quickest track to reverse the President’s attack on collective bargaining rights that has affected mariners sailing in the Military Sealift Command and Army Corps fleets. The House passed their final bill on Wednesday with the Senate likely to follow, before the NDAA heads to the President’s desk.

“Congress should not be in the business of weakening national security by weakening the workforce that makes national security possible,” said AFGE National President Everett Kelley. “DoD civilians are patriots. They serve this country with skill, honor, and sacrifice. Denying them collective bargaining rights is wrong, it is harmful to the mission, and it has no place in a defense bill.”

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac noted that CIVMARs employed by the MSC and Army Corps “are a vital component of our military readiness...The U.S. is already facing a national mariner shortage. Undermining collective bargaining rights will only worsen attrition, deter new entrants, and weaken the very workforce responsible for crewing our nation’s sealift fleet.”

UNION PLUS SWEEPSTAKES & SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES

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 America the Beautiful” Sweepstakes and Social Media Challenges, that could net you fabulous prizes. M.E.B.A. is enrolled in dozens of moneysaving Union Plus programs ranging from life insurance to financing children’s education.

The current sweepstakes will award a \$5,000 cash prize and a 3 to 5-night stay for two in Miami that includes VIP access to the South Beach Wine & Food Festival; Tickets to priority lane entry, lounge, celeb meet + greets; Exclusive dinners and event and airfare, hotel and transportation. Enter the Explore America the Beautiful Sweepstakes today. There is no purchase necessary. The sweepstakes is not open to the general public. You can visit https://cont.st/VUOVUS_DLrsZbP to enter (it’s quick!).

VACATION BENEFITS – 2025 YEAR-END CLOSING

Apply for Vacation and Port Relief Benefits early to avoid the year-end rush. - FILING DEADLINE: The deadline for issuing checks dated in 2025 in the Plan Office is Wednesday, December 17, 2025. DIRECT DEPOSIT: The final Direct Deposit Transfer for 2025 will be made on 12/18/2025 and the funds will be deposited into bank accounts on 12/22/2025. Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/17/25 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/2/2026. Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2025 must file before this deadline. Remember, Thursday, December 25, 2024 and Thursday, January 1, 2026 are holidays and the Plan Office will be closed. It is always wise to plan ahead, so you should verify the specific holiday schedule with the Plan Office Representative.

Split Your Vacation Payments between 2025 and 2026 - You can submit an Application for Vacation Pay prior to the end of the year and request that the payment of your vacation benefits be split. Two checks will be issued to you, one in 2025 and a second in 2026. The 12/17/2025 deadline applies to split claims also. The vacation benefits paid in this manner MUST be a continuous vacation period. Please contact the Vacation Plan staff in Baltimore at Vacation@mebaplans.org or by phone at 800-811-6322 if you have any questions.

UPCOMING M.E.B.A. HOLIDAY PARTIES

December 11 - **Los Angeles (San Pedro)** – 1400-1600 aboard the SS LANE VICTORY (2400 S. Miner Street, Berth 52 in San Pedro).

December 11 - **New York/New Jersey** – At the hall after the meeting (around 1400).

December 11 – **Norfolk** - At the hall after the meeting (around 1400).

December 11 - **Baltimore** – At the hall 1200 to 1700.

December 11 – **Tampa** – At Gaspar’s Grotto (1805 E. 7th Ave.) from 1500 to 1800 (Wear ugly sweater).

December 11 – **Honolulu** – At the hall from 1000 to 1400 p.m.

December 12 - **Oakland** – At the hall from 1230 to 1600.

December 12 - **Jacksonville** - At Pat’s Lounge (4870 Highway Ave.) from 1400 to 1700.

December 12 – **Houston** – At the hall from 1800 to 2200.

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

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

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

Wednesday, January 7 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

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

Friday, January 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.***

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