

# 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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### **CONGRESS AVERTS SHUTDOWN; RE-UPS EX-IM BANK & MSP**

Congress passed a two-part package this week to fund the federal government through the end of Fiscal Year 2020, tentatively averting a government shutdown before the Dec 20<sup>th</sup> deadline. The comprehensive appropriations bill includes a number of priorities we have been pushing for:

- \$300 million in funding for the Maritime Security Program (this reflects full funding identical to last fiscal year at \$5 million/vessel)
- 7 year reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank through Fiscal Year 2026. More importantly, the legislation provides an avenue for the Ex-Im Bank to continue operations under a "temporary board" if it does not meet a quorum (3/5 board members) to continue its lending authority. This would circumvent attempts by the Bank's biggest opponents to prevent the Bank from operating despite ongoing congressional authorization.
- Permanently repeals the excise "Cadillac" tax on high-cost employer sponsored plans. As you recall, the Affordable Care Act imposed a 40% excise tax on the value of employer-sponsored health plans that exceed certain cost thresholds (about \$11k for individuals and \$30k for families in 2022). While this tax has never gone into effect (currently delayed until 2022), the AFL-CIO and others have long opposed what they saw was an inevitable tax on carefully negotiated health insurance plans, with the cost ultimately passed down onto workers in the form of reduced benefits, less coverage, etc.

Congress also voted to pass the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2020, which includes the 10 year reauthorization of MSP. President Trump is expected to sign this and the appropriations package by week's end.

### **TTD HAILS TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) President Larry Willis issued a statement in support of appropriations money approved by Congress to help fuel America's transportation network. Willis said the bill, expected to be signed by the President by the end of the week, contains a number of hard fought priorities for transportation labor. 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 singled out several provisions of particular interest including the creation of a new frontline workforce training program for the public transportation workforce, suspension of the “Rostenkowski Test,” which will prevent over \$1 billion in cuts to transit formula and bus grant funding, and stable funding for the Maritime Security Program. He also hailed a tax credit extension designed to help fund vital infrastructure rehabilitation on America’s shortline railways, significant funding increases in aviation safety and air traffic control systems, and new language that restricts port infrastructure funding from being spent on misguided automation projects at the expense of longshore jobs.

### **LATEST NEWBUILD EPF JOINS MSC FLEET**

The USNS PUERTO RICO has joined the Military Sealift Command fleet after the Navy took delivery of the Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) vessel from Austal USA last week. This is the 11<sup>th</sup> EPF in the MSC fleet. The Spearhead-class EPFs have proven to be workhorse vessels deployed on high-profile missions around the world. EPF civilian mariner crews are represented by the M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU. The 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> EPFs in the program, USNS NEWPORT and USNS APALACHICOLA, are still under construction at Austal USA in Mobile, AL. Austal has been contracted to build the 14<sup>th</sup> vessel in the class as well, the USNS CODY.

EPFs are shallow-draft, all-aluminum, commercial-based catamarans that are capable of intra-theater personnel and cargo transport, which provide combatant commanders high-speed sealift mobility. EPFs enable rapid projection, agile maneuver and transport of personnel, equipment and supplies over operational distances with access to austere and degraded offload points.

### **NASSCO WORK BEGINS ON FLEET REPLENISHMENT OILER THAT HONORS GAY ACTIVIST**

San Diego’s NASSCO Shipyard began work this week on the second of six John Lewis-Class Military Sealift Command fleet oilers that will replace the aging Kaiser-class vessels. The ships will provide underway replenishment of fuel and stores to US Navy ships at sea and jet fuel for aircraft assigned to aircraft carriers. M.E.B.A. represents the engineers in MSC’s civilian mariner fleet.

The USNS HARVEY MILK (T-AO 206) will measure 742-feet long and have the capacity to carry 156,000 barrels of oil, including the Navy's new biofuels. The ship will also offer a significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability and will reach a speed of 20 knots. The John Lewis-class vessels are being named after great Americans – activists and difference-makers. The first ship USNS JOHN LEWIS was named after Rep. John Lewis, longtime Member of Congress and civil rights leader. The USNS HARVEY MILK pays homage to Harvey Milk who was a San Francisco icon, gay rights activist and former Navy diver. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren will be honored with the third vessel in the class, the USNS EARL WARREN. The next ship, USNS ROBERT F. KENNEDY is a tribute to the former Senator and Attorney General. The fifth vessel will be called USNS LUCY STONE and honors the 19<sup>th</sup> century abolitionist and suffragist. Finally the USNS SOJOURNER TRUTH, the sixth vessel in the Lewis-class, will be named after the African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist.

Among others, Stuart Milk, founder and President of the Harvey Milk Foundation and the nephew of the ship’s namesake, attended the NASSCO steel-cutting ceremony.

## **NLRB CONTINUES ASSAULT AGAINST UNIONS; NEW RULE DELAYS ORGANIZING ELECTIONS**

The National Labor Relations Board, which has been reshaped by President Trump into a unit hellbent on implementing pro-worker policies, is implementing a series of anti-worker rules including one to help employers stave off union organizing elections. The new rule was issued without prior notice or public comment and is set to take effect on April 16, 2020. Among other things, it would significantly prolong the timetable for unions to hold representation elections and allow for the suspension of voting until the resolution of disputes brought by an employer.

The Economic Policy Institute, a non-partisan think tank, said the new “NLRB election rule betrays the workers it is meant to protect.” AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said, “the Board’s Republican majority has engaged in a flurry of actions in recent days—all designed to make it harder to form a union and have a voice at work, including a comprehensive rewrite of the rules governing representation election that was issued without giving any notice to the public or opportunity for the labor or management communities to comment.”

NLRB member Lauren McFerran, the lone Democrat on the Board, said the new rule “more than triples the time it will take workers to get from petition to certification in a contested union election.” She said the rule “places an unjustified burden on workers seeking to exercise their fundamental workplace rights.” McFerran’s five-year term expired this week and her departure removes the lone worker-friendly voice from a Board that continues its interest in issuing a stream of anti-labor rulings.

## **COAST GUARD EXTENDS QUALIFIED ASSESSOR REQUIREMENTS**

Current Coast Guard policy allows for the acceptance of STCW assessments, performed for and signed by an assessor not approved by the Coast Guard, until December 31, 2019. Such an assessor must meet the professional requirements in 46 CFR 10.405(a)(3) to determine competence for the specific endorsement. The Coast Guard is aware that as a result of the limited number of approved QAs, there may be a hardship on mariners trying to complete STCW assessments after December 31, 2019. In consideration of this, the Coast Guard will continue to allow STCW assessments to be signed by an assessor who meets the requirements specified in NVIC 19-14 until December 31, 2021. These assessments must be submitted to the Coast Guard as part of a complete application no later than June 30, 2022.

Qualified military personnel need not be approved QAs and may continue to sign assessments after December 31, 2021. Mariners are encouraged to obtain approval as a QA in accordance with 46 CFR 10.405(a). Additional information on obtaining approval can be found in NVIC 19-14 Enclosure (1). NVIC 19-14 may be viewed at <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/NVIC/>. Mariners and other interested parties should contact the Mariner Credentialing Program Policy Division at (202) 372-2357 or [MMCPolicy@uscg.mil](mailto:MMCPolicy@uscg.mil) with any questions or feedback.

## **CMES ADDS NEW P.E./MM COURSE DATES**

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School has added three course dates to their 2020 schedule for its Port Engineer/Marine Maintenance class. The classes are scheduled for March 16–April 3; August 10–28; and October 12–30.

This three-week course targets those individuals at the technical-management level with responsibilities for marine maintenance and/or port engineering duties, including for government contracts. The course is designed to prepare those individuals currently working as port engineers, or

those individuals looking to pursue a port engineer position. Instructional topics covered include Engineering; Contracting, including for government contracts and Shipyard Organizations; Preparing for a Maintenance period; Engineering Administration, including for government contracts, for an Availability Period; Fundamentals of Project Management, including for government contracts; Weld Inspection; Dry Docking; Propulsion System Alignment; Corrosion, Surface Prep, Coatings, and Inspection; Contract Closeout, including for government contracts; and Shipyard Safety.

Applications may be sent via the CMES website, fax (410) 822-7220, or email to [applications@mebaschool.org](mailto:applications@mebaschool.org)

### **APPLY FOR UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS**

M.E.B.A. families have until January 31, 2020 to apply for college education assistance money through Union Plus. M.E.B.A. members, retirees and their families - as well as members of affiliated M.E.B.A. unions - are eligible courtesy of the Union's enrollment in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from life insurance to financing children's educations. Visit [unionplus.org/scholarship](http://unionplus.org/scholarship) for more. Families of M.E.B.A. members or affiliated members are among past scholarship money recipients. Union Plus Scholarship are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school or a recognized technical or trade school. Recipients are selected based on academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor.

Applications can be submitted up until Tuesday January 31, 2020, at noon (EST). Those arriving after the deadline will not be considered. The award date is May 31, 2020. During the first week of June 2020, award recipients will be notified. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended. The required essays can account for up to half your total score. Scholarship applicants are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators. Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2020. Students may re-apply each year. Get the official application and all the details including eligibility criteria by visiting [unionplus.org/scholarship](http://unionplus.org/scholarship) Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$4.5 million to students of union families. Over 3,000 union families have benefited from the program.

### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

Monday, January 6 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;  
Tuesday, January 7 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;  
Wednesday, January 8 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;  
Thursday, January 9 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;  
Friday, January 10 – 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.*