

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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FULL AHEAD FOR VOKAC 2.0

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac is about to begin his second four-year term to continue further support of our membership while bringing this great Union to new heights in our approaching 150th anniversary year.

Newly elected and returning officials will take the oath of office in the very first minute of January 1, 2025, marking the continuation of an administration that has already demonstrated unwavering commitment, dynamic energy, and a proven track record of delivering meaningful victories for our membership.

The Union's governing board, the District Executive Committee, will be largely the same but welcomes in newly elected Executive V.P. Max Alper who has served the membership for years as the Patrolman in Oakland. Seattle Patrolman Kevin Cross also steps up to a larger role as he takes over the hall as Branch Agent. The Union is excited by the handful of seagoing members coming back "on the beach" to help strengthen operations as new officials. M.E.B.A. is welcoming Torey Zingales, who has served as an official in the past, as the new Branch Agent in L.A. Craig Moran takes over as the Government Fleet Representative & Branch Agent in Norfolk. We have three new faces taking over as Patrolmen in their respective ports. Chris Coombs in Oakland, Kenny Smith in NY/NJ and Jacob LeBeouf in L.A. Many thanks to the stalwart M.E.B.A. officials who chose not to run for another term in office but can be satisfied that they did much on behalf of the membership during their years in office: Claudia Cimini, Jeff Duncan, Rich Doherty and Jack Menendez. Thank you!

All those newly elected or returning to office will take over their respective posts at the stroke of midnight on December 31st. Before assuming office, according to the M.E.B.A. By-Laws, each official will take the following oath:

"I, ____, do hereby sincerely pledge my honor to perform the duties of my office as prescribed by the National Constitution and the By-Laws of this organization, and to uphold these Constitutions to the best of my ability. I will deliver to my successor in office all books, papers and other property of this District that may be in my possession at the close of my official term. Further, I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I am not a member of any organization which advocates the overthrow of the

Government of the United States by force, violence or other subversive or unconstitutional methods, and during my term of office, I will not knowingly aid or support the activities of any such party or organization. All this I solemnly promise with the full knowledge that to violate this pledge, is to stamp me as a person devoid of principle and destitute of honor.”

NLRB WAS TOO “LABOR-FRIENDLY”

Recently, the Senate narrowly rejected a motion, in a 49-50 vote, to proceed with a confirmation vote for National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Chair Lauren McFerran, whose term expired last week. Had she been confirmed, the five-person Board would have retained a majority of Democrats until August 2026. Senators Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, both former Democrats who have distanced themselves from the party, cast the pivotal votes against the motion.

The NLRB is typically composed of three members from the president's party and two from the opposition. Due to staggered terms, the agency's control sometimes doesn't shift immediately with a new administration, often taking a year or two to reflect the change in leadership. McFerran's nomination faced significant opposition from business groups and many Republican lawmakers, who criticized recent NLRB rulings and regulations as being overly favorable to unions. As a result of the failed vote, incoming President Donald Trump will have the opportunity to appoint two Board members once in office, avoiding the prospect of having a Democratic majority on the NLRB.

The AFL-CIO didn't take the announcement well. Federation President Liz Shuler said, “Today, 50 senators didn't just vote against Lauren McFerran's reconfirmation—they voted against the working people of this country. Make no mistake: This vote had nothing to do with stopping Chair McFerran's renomination and everything to do with reversing generations of progress workers have made toward building a fairer and more just economy...Corporate lobbyists and anti-union politicians may have stopped this vote today, but they won't stop workers from organizing. The 13 million working people of the AFL-CIO will continue to have working people's backs. The labor movement was born out of the fight for the very rights the NLRB protects, and we won't stop until every single worker in America has a fair and free shot to join a union and better our lives.”

COAST GUARD ALTERS MMC FEE PAYMENT METHOD

The Coast Guard has issued a final rule updating the accepted required payment method for mariner credentialing fees. Effective January 19, 2025, the National Maritime Center (NMC) and Regional Examination Centers (RECs) will only accept user fee payments made using the USCG Merchant Mariner User Fee Payment Page on Pay.gov. Pay.gov is a secure service provided by the United States Department of the Treasury. Acceptable payment methods within Pay.gov include credit card, debit card, and bank account routing number.

Please note that after January 19, 2025, the NMC and RECs may no longer accept any other form of payment including cash, check, money order, or credit card, regardless of whether they are provided in person or via mail. All payments, other than Pay.gov, will be returned to the applicant and the applicant will be required to submit a new fee payment using Pay.gov.

Once you have paid your fees using Pay.gov, please ensure you print or save your receipt and attach the receipt to your application prior to submitting the application to NMC.

Active-Duty members of the Uniformed Services may be eligible for fee waivers. See CG-MMC Policy Letter 3-24.

Please visit the NMC website or contact the NMC Customer Service Center by using the NMC online chat system, by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

REDUNDANT NMC OATH REQUIREMENT PHASED OUT

As of December 17, 2024, the National Maritime Center (NMC) no longer requires applicants for original merchant mariner credentials (MMCs) to take an oath before an authorized official or notary. In the final rule published on December 17, 2024, titled Mariner Credentialing Program Transformation, it was determined the requirement in 46 Code of Federal Regulations part 10.225(c) for taking the oath before an authorized official or notary is a redundant part of the original MMC application process. By signing the Application for Merchant Mariner Credential (Form CG-719B), the applicant attests to “solemnly swear or affirm” to abide by the requirements of the oath. This legally binds a mariner, so no additional requirement before an authorized official is necessary.

When filling out the CG-719B, in Section IV, Part 5, of the form, applicants need to sign and date where Signature of Applicant is indicated. However, the signature of individual authorized to administer the oath is no longer required.

For more information, the final rule is available on the Federal Register or by searching on www.regulations.gov under Docket Number USCG–2021–0834.

FATALITIES ON-THE-JOB DECREASED DURING LATEST BLS REPORTING PERIOD

There were 5,283 fatal work injuries recorded in the United States in 2023, a 3.7-percent decrease from 5,486 in 2022, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recently reported. The fatal work injury rate was 3.5 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers, down from 3.7 in 2022. The report analyzes the last full year for which complete data and its verification exists. Among the reports key findings were:

- A worker died every 99 minutes from a work-related injury in 2023 compared to 96 minutes in 2022.
- Transportation incidents were the most frequent type of fatal event, accounting for 36.8 percent (1,942) of all occupational fatalities in 2023.
- Fatalities due to violent acts totaled 740 in 2023. Homicides (458) accounted for 61.9 percent of violent acts and 8.7 percent of all work-related fatalities.
- Opioids were the primary source of 162 fatalities and a contributor in an additional 144 fatalities where multiple drugs were the source.
- The fatal injury count and rate for Black or African American workers decreased from 2022 to 2023. The count dropped 10.2 percent from 734 in 2022 to 659 in 2023 and the rate dropped from 4.2 to 3.6 cases per 100,000 FTE workers.

The AFL-CIO released a statement following the issuance of the report. President Liz Shuler said, “every worker deserves to leave for work without fear for their safety and return home unharmed at the end of the day. This new data show that too many workers are still dying on the job and that

Black and Latino workers are dying on the job at higher rates. The labor movement will not be satisfied until the number of worker deaths is zero...With this data showing more workplace deaths in many industries that are largely non-unionized and affecting workers who may be too intimidated to speak out about unsafe conditions, it's clear that a union contract is essential for a safe job site. The labor movement will continue fighting to unionize workplaces so that every worker can have the safer conditions that unions bargain for and be protected when raising concerns.”

MEMBERS SHOULD KEEP A CHECK ON DOCS & NOTICES SITE

Members and applicants are reminded to make use of the “Documents & Member Notices” section of the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) to find important notices and forms relating to the Union and our industry. If a Union hall is closed for a national or local holiday, that information will be reflected in that section. You might want to double-check the site before making a hall visit. Many NMC/Coast Guard notices are posted including REC information and Marine Safety Information Bulletins.

In addition, you'll find application forms for Deep-Sea, Government Fleet and the various bargaining units. Also posted are Group Seniority Card application forms, Sailing Time Verification & Transmittal forms and Change of Bargaining Unit Affiliation forms. The M.E.B.A. By-Laws, Constitution and Shipping Rules are there as well along with many other important documents including the Recommendation Form - (*Reminder: two recommendation letters are needed from a Senior officer who sailed with the Applicant for at least 60 days.*)

Please make it a habit to get familiar with that web page. To get there, go to the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) and scroll down to the large “Documents & Member Notices” box on the right side of the main page.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The M.E.B.A. wishes you and your family a safe and thriving new year filled with warmth, love, and happiness. Eat well, stay safe, and try to take some time to rest and relax. Many thanks to all our members and applicants who continue to work throughout this holiday season, and to all, we appreciate all the hard work you do year-round. May your New Year be filled with prosperity and joy.

M.E.B.A. halls and offices close early on Tuesday December 31 and will remain closed on New Year's Day, Wednesday, January 1, 2025. Thursday and Friday are workdays in the halls. Happy New Year!

UNION-MADE HANGOVER CURE

Labor411, which encourages the use of products made by union-friendly companies that treat their workers fairly and give them a voice on the job, has found the cure for the after-effects for New Year's Eve reveling. There are plenty of union-made items to help you get back to yourself and face 2025 with a clear head and some pep in your step. Fill up your system, your pantry and your medicine cabinet with these brands made by worker-friendly companies. Happy New Year!

Relief – Afrin; Aleve; Alka-Seltzer; Bayer; Milk of Magnesia; Pepto-Bismol. **That First Cup** - Eight O'Clock Coffee; Folgers; Kauai Coffee; Maxwell House; Millstone Coffee; USA Coffee Company. **Hydration** - All Sport; American Springs; Apothic Red; Dasani; DejaBlue; Mio; Nothern Fall's; Penafiel; Pocono; Poland Spring; Realemon; Realime; Venom Energy.

To view more union-made products, visit the Labor411 directory at <https://labor411.org/listing-region/consumer-products/>

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

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; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mehq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, January 9 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300**
(Tampa meeting to be held at Coppertail Brewing Company - 2601 E 2nd Ave, Tampa, FL)

Friday, January 10 – **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; mehq@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 Calhoun 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