



MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)
"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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CHAO CONFIRMED AT DOT

Elaine Chao was confirmed this week to begin her job as the nation's Secretary of Transportation. Senators approved the nomination in a 93 to 6 vote allowing her to get to work to deal with a full plate of issues.

Chao has a strong maritime résumé. The former Secretary of Labor, she chaired the Federal Maritime Commission, previously served at the Department of Transportation as Deputy Secretary and spent time as Deputy Maritime Administrator. The daughter of a shipping magnate who emigrated from Taiwan, Elaine headed up the United Way and also served as director of the Peace Corps. Her husband is Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY).

M.E.B.A. congratulates Secretary Chao and looks forward to working with her again. Transportation Trades Department (AFL-CIO) President Ed Wytkind also wished her well as she prepares to head up a multitude of challenges. "Secretary Chao will play a central role in following through with President Trump's promise to reverse this neglect and finally modernize our transportation system with significant new investments. I look forward to working with Secretary Chao to advance a robust, bipartisan investment plan that repairs and expands our transportation system, lifts more working people into the middle class and protects and honors the jobs and rights of frontline transportation workers who operate, maintain and build our vast passenger and freight network."

PRAISE FOR CUSTOMS PROPOSAL TO TIGHTEN JONES ACT

The American Maritime Partnership (AMP) and others are hailing a Customs and Border Protection proposal that would help strengthen Jones Act requirements related to the transportation of offshore oil and gas operation equipment. AMP says the effort would close loopholes exploited by foreign shipping interests and could translate into thousands of U.S. jobs. The American Maritime Partnership is a coalition representing the domestic maritime industry that counts the M.E.B.A. and AMC as members along with a host of maritime companies and interests.

"The men and women of the American maritime industry commend the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's efforts to rightfully restore over 3,200 American jobs to the American economy and close loopholes that gave preference to foreign workers and foreign shipbuilding," said Tom Allegretti, Chairman of the American Maritime Partnership. "We applaud President Trump's commitment to 'buy American and hire American,' and the correct and lawful interpretation of the Jones Act will ensure the preservation of American jobs and maintenance of

the U.S. shipyard industrial base, both of which are critical to our economic security and national security.”

“The Jones Act is a pillar for America’s maritime industry that serves to put this nation’s workers and ingenuity ahead of foreign interests,” added Rep. Duncan Hunter, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation. “This decision by CBP is in the spirit of recognizing and upholding the Jones Act. And by closing loopholes that existed to the detriment of American workers, CBP has taken an important step that underscores the extraordinary importance of the Jones Act and its role in strengthening our maritime industry. My hope is that this decision is the start of an even stronger transition in favor of the Jones Act across the entire federal government and I commend CBP for its leadership in taking this action.”

Senator John Kennedy, a Republican from Louisiana, also lent support to the proposal saying that it would be a boon for American jobs in his state. “This decision will get Louisiana mariners back to work by restoring the proper treatment of U.S.-built vessels crewed by U.S. citizens in the Gulf of Mexico. The offshore industry is a lifeblood to Louisiana. We need to close loopholes that benefit foreign workers at the detriment of Louisiana mariners. I look forward to working with President Trump on this issue, and I applaud the CBP for taking a positive step that will benefit the lives of many Louisiana families.”

“I applaud the corrective action taken last week by US Customs and Border Protection that supports the rule of law and reinforces the federal government’s compliance with the Jones Act,” said Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA). “This corrective action is the right thing to do for Louisiana workers and will also benefit the American economy.”

OCEAN GIANT AT THE END OF THE EARTH

The M.E.B.A.-crewed M/V OCEAN GIANT was at McMurdo Station in the South Pole this week as Operation Deep Freeze (ODF) heats up.

The ship was contracted by the Military Sealift Command to be a key part of their annual Joint Task Force Antarctica mission for the resupply of McMurdo – a remote scientific outpost. MSC has supported ODF since the Station was established in 1955, providing supplies and fuel to scientists.

The vessel reached the outpost in late January and began conducting cargo offloads from the McMurdo ice pier soon after. The ship arrived with 550 pieces of cargo consisting of nearly 7 million pounds of supplies such as frozen and dry food stores, building materials, vehicles, and electronic equipment and parts. Members of Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One helped conduct the offload.

In years past, temperatures at McMurdo Station have hovered in the single digits and below zero daily. The icy winds from Mt. Erebus, known to be the coldest place on earth, blew upwards of 20 knots or more, making for long, bone chilling days. This year, the weather condition on the remote continent have been exceptional with temperatures near freezing and low winds. According to Larry Larsson, MSC’s representative at McMurdo Station, a slight change in scheduling has also played a positive role in cargo operations.

Before departing McMurdo, OCEAN GIANT will be loaded with retrograde cargo for transportation off the continent, including ice core samples carried back to the United States in

sub-zero freezer containers, as well as trash and recyclable materials for disposal and equipment no longer required on station.

M.E.B.A. Chief Engineer Tom Eastwood is heading up the engine room on the OCEAN GIANT's Antarctic adventure joined by 1st A/E Patrick Fales and 2nd A/E William Sprouse. M.E.B.A. retiree Dave Seltzer is also onboard serving as the Cargo Crane Mechanic and making sure cargo operations go smoothly.

CONTINUED MMC PROCESSING DELAYS

M.E.B.A. dispatched a letter to the National Maritime Center (NMC) expressing the Union's concerns with the ongoing agency delays in processing Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC). NMC recently pointed out that "a greater-than-average volume" of MMC applications has inordinately held up the process. The Union expressed deep concerns that these excessive delays could be unnecessarily keeping our members sidelined from desired work opportunities while they wait for this protracted process to unfold.

The M.E.B.A. letter urged the NMC to better tackle the backlog with additional manpower or resources that will expedite processing. "This not only affects our members' livelihoods," the letter said, "but with approximately 20% of our member's credentials expiring every year, it could create a serious manning issue for our companies and our contracted military vessels."

As always, mariners are highly encouraged to submit their applications to RECs, well in advance of expiration, via e-mail, standard mail, fax, or drop off in person. The appointment scheduler on the NMC website can also be utilized. Mariners whose credentials will expire within the next 6 months should not wait until several weeks prior to their expiration date to submit their renewal applications and are reminded that the post-dating of credentials up to 8 months is still afforded by the Coast Guard.

For additional information, visit the NMC website at <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/>, call 1-888-427-5662, or e-mail them at IASKNMC@uscg.mil.

FEDERAL RIGHT-TO-WORK (FOR LESS) BILL AIMS TO BLEED UNIONS

Two House Republicans are pushing ahead with designs to weaken labor unions with their introduction of new federal "right-to-work" legislation. Reps. Steve King (IA) and Joe Wilson (SC) introduced H.R. 785 on Wednesday and repeated the fallacy that workers flourish under right-to-work laws and that it serves as a boon for job creation and economic growth.

As summarized by the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, a "right-to-work" law stops employers and employees from negotiating a type of agreement—known as a union security clause—that requires all workers who receive the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement to pay their share of the costs of representing them. These laws say unions must represent every eligible employee, whether or not he or she pays dues. In other words, "right to work" laws allow workers to pay nothing and still get all the benefits of union membership. With GOP control across the board, the legislation has the ability to become the law of the land.

But AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka pointed out that "Right-to-Work" is a lie dressed up in a feel-good slogan. It doesn't give workers freedom—instead, it weakens our right to join together and bargain for better wages and working conditions. Its end goal is to destroy unions.

Numbers don't lie. Workers in states with right to work laws have wages that are 12% lower. That's because unions raise wages for all workers, not just our members."

He noted that a recent Pew survey shows that 60% of Americans—an overwhelming majority—support unions. "Americans clearly see the value of coming together with their co-workers to tackle inequality. Right to work isn't the will of the people, it's legislation pushed on working people by out-of-touch corporations that want to ship jobs overseas, cut health and safety protections, and pay lower wages. This is an attempt by corporate CEOs to further tip the scale even more in their favor, at working people's expense."

"Working people were loud and clear in this past election. We want an economy that works for all, not just corporations. We know we need to rewrite the rules of the economy so that policies like bad trade deals and right to work aren't the new norm. President Trump has said he supports unions and the people who are our members. He has stood up to corporate Republicans on trade. We call on him to do the same on right to work, and to stand up for every worker's right to join a union."

TRAINING DATABASE NEEDS YOUR MMC/STCW EXPIRATION DATE(S)

Member and applicant information is being sought to allow the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School (CMES) to better assist membership training needs. Due to the regulatory training required for Basic Safety Training (BST) Refresher and BST Revalidation courses, the CMES is requesting that every M.E.B.A. member and applicant submit the expiration date for their Merchant Mariner Credential to the M.E.B.A. School. If your STCW Endorsement expiration date differs from your MMC expiration then please include that information as well. This info will allow the Training Plan to more accurately determine how many BST Refresher and/or BST Revalidation courses need to be added to the schedule by better understanding how many members need to renew their credentials in a given year.

Please send an email with your information to info@mebaschool.org. Make sure you properly identify yourself (last 4 numbers of SSN will help). Additionally, a form will be added to the CMES website shortly as a second means of submitting this information.

SIGN UP FOR M.E.B.A. VACATION PLAN DIRECT DEPOSIT

Designed for convenience, M.E.B.A. members can help themselves by taking advantage of the Vacation Plan Direct Deposit that will help save them time and ease Plans processing costs. Authorization forms are available from the Plans Office, Plans Outport Offices and at the Plans' website – www.mebaplans.org (Forms, Vacation). Complete details are available on the Plans' site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, February 6 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, February 7 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, February 8 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, February 9 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, February 10 – Honolulu@1100.

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