

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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M.E.B.A. CELEBRATES 150 YEARS OF STRENGTH, SERVICE & SOLIDARITY

This Sunday, the M.E.B.A. proudly marks its 150th anniversary, a testament to the enduring strength, expertise and leadership of the M.E.B.A. as the gold standard in maritime labor. Since its founding on February 23, 1875, the M.E.B.A. has been the driving force behind the rights, safety, and working conditions of U.S. maritime officers, ensuring fair wages, industry-leading benefits, and strong work rules that set the standard for the profession. Born out of necessity at a time when mariners faced deadly working conditions and exploitation, the M.E.B.A. became the first national maritime labor organization, uniting engineers from lakes, rivers, and ocean ports. Over the last century and a half, the union has been a powerful advocate for its members, as well as for all American mariners, leading the fight for licensing requirements, workplace protections, and legislation that safeguarded American jobs aboard U.S.-flag vessels. The M.E.B.A. plays a critical role in both national defense and humanitarian efforts, serving in every U.S. conflict since its inception and delivering vital aid worldwide. From World War II convoys to the 9/11 maritime evacuation, government and disaster relief cargoes, M.E.B.A. members continue to deliver the goods and answer the call with professionalism, skill and dedication through peace, war and pandemic.

The union has shaped the modern maritime industry, securing contracts that offer the best wages, benefits, and protections in the sector. As an original charter member of the AFL-CIO, M.E.B.A. remains at the forefront of the labor movement, ensuring that the voices of mariners and the maritime workforce are heard at the highest levels.

"As the M.E.B.A. reaches this remarkable 150th anniversary, we honor the legacy of our founders and pledge to continue their fight for a better future for our membership and their families," noted National M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac. "We power forward with confidence, ready to meet the challenges of the future and continue the important work of improving wages, benefits, and working conditions for our members. Congratulations to the M.E.B.A. on 150 years of strength, service, and solidarity."

ILA RATIFICATION VOTE NEXT WEEK

After the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Wage Scale Committee unanimously approved the new USMX-ILA Master Contract, the ratification vote by ILA rank-and-file members is set to take place on Tuesday, February 25, 2025.

After the Committee met in Hollywood, FL, ILA President Harold Daggett noted, “Our work today moves us closer to the ratification vote on February 25, when ILA members will decide on what I believe is the greatest contract ever negotiated by a labor organization. Our collective strength has delivered the richest contract in our history.”

If ratified, the agreement - retroactive to October 1, 2024 - will remain in effect through September 30, 2030. Full details of the contract have not been disclosed.

NEW HAMPSHIRE ONCE AGAIN DEFEATS PERENNIAL RIGHT-TO-WORK LEGISLATION

In a victory for workers, the latest attempt to pass so-called “right-to-work” legislation in the New Hampshire Legislature was indefinitely postponed last week, effectively defeating the bill. Various versions of House Bill 238-FN have been introduced repeatedly since the 1980s, all aiming to weaken union bargaining power and make New Hampshire the only right-to-work state in the region.

In the interests of corporate greed, so-called right-to-work laws diminish union bargaining power and their ability to represent workers effectively. By allowing workers to benefit from union representation without having to pay for it, right-to-work laws - currently in force in 27 states – thin out dues-paying members and weaken union leverage in negotiations with employers. That makes it more difficult to negotiate better wages, benefits, and working conditions for workers.

“For the fortieth consecutive time, so-called ‘Right-to-Work’ is dead,” said New Hampshire AFL-CIO President Glenn Brackett in a joint statement with other labor leaders. “Once again, today, a bipartisan coalition of legislators did their job, listened to their constituents, and voted to kill House Bill 238-FN, this year’s version of the fraudulently titled ‘Right-to-Work.’ Every new legislature for the last 40 years has seen this attack on workers’ rights and every legislature, regardless of which party is in the majority, has rejected it.”

LNG AS A FUEL COURSE EXTENDED TO FIVE DAYS

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that its Combined Basic & Advanced IGF Code Operations course (known as “LNG as a Fuel”) has been extended to five days. The decision was made based on membership requests as well as the amount of time required in the simulators for the course. Previously a four-day course, LNG as a Fuel will now run from *Monday through Friday*.

The revised schedule for courses remaining this year is as follows: March 24–28; May 5–9; May 12–16; June 16–20; August 4–8; August 11–15; September 15–19; September 22–26; October 6–10; October 13–17; November 3–7; and November 10–14.

Applications can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org), by fax (410) 822-7220, or by email to applications@mebaschool.org

GAO REPORT HIGHLIGHTS CYBERSECURITY RISKS TO MARITIME TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

A new Government Accountability Office (GAO) report paints a concerning picture of the cybersecurity vulnerabilities facing the Maritime Transportation System (MTS), the interconnected network of ports, waterways, vessels, and infrastructure that supports the movement of goods and

people by sea. The report, mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, identifies significant and growing cyber risks and calls for stronger Coast Guard action to mitigate these threats.

The GAO report emphasizes the escalating cybersecurity risks to the MTS, citing several key factors. They note that nation-state actors like China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia, along with transnational criminal organizations, pose significant cyber threats to the MTS. In addition, the increasing reliance on technology within MTS facilities and vessels creates a growing attack surface vulnerable to cyberattacks. Cyber incidents have already disrupted port operations, and future incidents could have severe consequences, potentially impacting the flow of commerce and national security.

The Coast Guard plays a crucial role in safeguarding the MTS, assisting owners and operators through technical assistance, voluntary guidelines, and cyber threat information sharing. They also conduct inspections to identify cybersecurity-related deficiencies. However, the GAO report highlights critical shortcomings in the Coast Guard's approach. Finding that the Coast Guard's Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement system lacks readily accessible, complete information on cybersecurity-specific inspection results. GAO says this deficiency hinders effective oversight and the ability to proactively prevent cyberattacks. While the Coast Guard has developed a cyber strategy, GAO says it doesn't fully align with all the key characteristics of an effective national strategy. Specifically, they say it falls short in areas beyond purpose, scope, and methodology. They also say the Coast Guard hasn't fully addressed leading practices for ensuring that its cyber workforce possesses the necessary competencies. Specifically, they say competency requirements haven't been fully developed, and competency gaps within the workforce haven't been fully assessed or addressed.

To address these critical vulnerabilities, the GAO issued key recommendations to the Coast Guard including recommendations to update the system of record to provide ready access to complete cyber deficiency data; ensuring that cyber strategy and plans align with all key characteristics of a national strategy; and to analyze, assess, and address competency gaps within the cyber workforce.

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the Coast Guard, concurred with all of the GAO's recommendations and admitted that implementing these recommendations will be crucial for protecting this vital sector from increasingly sophisticated cyber threats.

NOMINEE FOR LABOR SECRETARY NAVIGATES CHALLENGES AT CONFIRMATION HEARING

Former Congresswoman from Oregon Lori Chavez-DeRemer faced tough questions from both sides of the aisle during her Senate confirmation hearing for Secretary of Labor yesterday. The hearing, held before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, examined her past legislative positions and her stance on key labor policies. While in the House, she co-sponsored the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, a pro-union bill aimed at overturning state Right-to-Work laws. Her pro-labor stances earned her backing from several unions during her reelection campaign. During the hearing, both Democratic and Republican senators pressed Chavez-DeRemer on her prior support for the PRO Act. She explained that she co-sponsored the bill to “be at the table and have those conversations,” but admitted that she now sees flaws in the legislation. When asked by Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) whether she still supported overturning state Right-to-Work laws, she firmly responded, “No.”

A significant portion of the hearing focused on reports that the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), led by Elon Musk, had received access to sensitive labor data. Democratic Senators raised concerns that Musk could use confidential government information to benefit his businesses while suppressing competitors. Chavez-DeRemer assured lawmakers that she would protect private Labor Department information but emphasized that she had not yet discussed the issue with the President. On immigration, she took a firm stance, arguing that “mass immigration over the last four years has hurt the American worker.” She pledged to support President Trump’s efforts to prioritize American workers. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) raised concerns about the NLRB’s role in protecting workers’ rights and asked how Chavez-DeRemer would handle issues if confirmed. She did not provide a specific answer but acknowledged the importance of ensuring fair and transparent processes for workers.

If confirmed, she would oversee a department responsible for enforcing federal labor laws, overseeing worker protections, and shaping the future of American labor policy under the Trump administration.

PASS WORKERS FIRED AS PART OF FAA PURGE

Hundreds of workers, including those represented by M.E.B.A. affiliate PASS (Professional Aviation Safety Specialists) have been fired at the Federal Aviation Administration as part of President Trump’s reshaping of the federal bureaucracy. PASS represents more than 11,000 FAA and Defense Department workers throughout the air traffic control system.

PASS President David Spero took issue with the termination of probationary employees at the FAA saying, “We are troubled and disappointed by the administration’s decision to fire FAA probationary employees PASS represents without cause nor based on performance or conduct...These are not nameless, faceless bureaucrats. They are our family, friends and neighbors. They contribute to our communities. Many military veterans are among them. It is shameful to toss aside dedicated public servants who have chosen to work on behalf of their fellow Americans.

PASS condemned the firings as a rushed and poorly thought-out move that would put even more pressure on an already overburdened workforce. The union pointed to the recent plane crash in Washington D.C., along with several other aviation accidents across the country in the past few weeks, as proof that now is the worst possible time to reduce staff at the agency. “This draconian action will increase the workload and place new responsibilities on a workforce that is already stretched thin,” Spero noted. “This decision did not consider the staffing needs of the FAA, which is already challenged by understaffing. Staffing decisions should be based on an individual agency’s mission-critical needs. To do otherwise is dangerous when it comes to public safety.”

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy defended the cuts, stating that fewer than 400 of the FAA's 45,000 employees were affected. He emphasized that none of those let go were air traffic controllers or essential safety personnel.

REGISTRATION FORMS FOR 2025 CAA REUNION ARE NOW AVAILABLE

The entire M.E.B.A. membership, active and retired, and especially Calhoon graduates, are invited to the Calhoon Alumni Association (CAA) Reunion scheduled for June 27-29 at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. The weekend will also include a celebration of the M.E.B.A.’s 150th anniversary. The Union is 150 years old as of February 23 and there will be much rejoicing. Information, event fees, and registration forms are NOW on the CMES website located at www.mebaschool.org. Look

for the CAA page link. The weekend kicks off with the traditional Golf Tournament on Friday, June 27 at 1000. There will be an evening muster at the Calhoon Saloon later that evening. The party on the Manor House Lawn will take place all day Saturday, June 28. This is a great family event that you should be sure to sign up for. Direct any questions to caa@mebaschool.org and check out the School website to get the complete lowdown. Take this opportunity to spread the word throughout the M.E.B.A. world as well as to past Calhoon School cadets, instructors, shipmates, friends, and families.

WINTER MAINTENANCE AS GREAT LAKES FLEET READIES FOR THAW

With winter in full swing, the U.S.-flagged fleet of Lakers have tied up in ports across the Great Lakes region to perform critical maintenance before the navigational locks in Sault Ste Marie, Michigan reopen on March 25th. Hundreds of skilled shipyard workers are supporting the nearly \$150 million maintenance investment being made on these massive ships. After nine and a half months of continuous operations loading and unloading various bulk cargo, the ships get a short rest period. Most of the crew that sailed will get a prolonged vacation while engineers and other support staff work over the winter to make sure the vessels are in top shape when the season begins again in March. Propulsion equipment will be tuned and, in some cases, replaced, steel hull plating and welds will get refreshed, and crew comforts will be added or upgraded.

Since most of the U.S.-flagged fleet of lakers are too large to exit the Great Lakes due to the limiting size of the Seaway locks, they will remain comfortably accommodated at some of the world's best ship repair facilities in Great Lakes states. Investment in the current Great Lakes ships is an investment in the future of the North American economy and the continued strength of our nation.

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

Monday, March 3 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, March 4 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, March 5 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, March 6 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, March 7 – **Honolulu@1100**

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***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