

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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WHITE HOUSE CONSIDERING FURTHER EXTENSION OF JONES ACT WAIVER

News reports and insiders have acknowledged that the Trump Administration could possibly extend the ongoing Jones Act waiver beyond its August 16 expiration after another flare-up of tensions with Iran. The reports say administration officials are considering a more limited extension that would geographically restrict where foreign-flagged vessels could transport cargo between U.S. ports. Foreign-flag vessels, including those flying the Chinese flag, have had a field day during this extended waiver period as they continue usurping jobs that had been reserved for U.S. ships and American mariners.

Already, this has been the longest-ever waiver of the Jones Act and will reach its 150th day on August 16th. More than 50 House Republicans — including four of the highest-ranking GOP leaders — urged President Trump in a recent letter to allow the current Jones Act waiver expire as scheduled on Aug. 16. They argued that extending the waiver would cost American maritime jobs, weaken the U.S.-flag fleet, and further undermine the nation's domestic maritime industry.

Reuters reported this week that the White House, along with the Departments of Energy, Transportation, and the Interior, recently met to discuss options, though a White House official emphasized that no decision has been made. The official stated that the administration believes the waiver has helped prevent supply chain shortages and that its use is being closely monitored.

The possibility of another extension is likely to renew concerns throughout the American maritime industry. The Jones Act supports a strong U.S.-flag fleet, sustains thousands of family-supporting maritime jobs, strengthens the nation's shipbuilding industrial base, and ensures a pool of trained American mariners available to support military operations and emergency response. Maritime stakeholders have consistently argued that broad waivers should be reserved only for genuine emergencies and that prolonged reliance on foreign-flag vessels undermines U.S. economic and national security interests while discouraging investment in the domestic fleet.

In a LinkedIn post this week, OSG CEO Sam Norton argued that the ongoing Jones Act waiver has failed to deliver on its stated goal of lowering fuel prices for American consumers while instead benefiting major oil companies. He points to soaring refining margins, or "crack spreads," and expectations of sharply higher quarterly earnings for companies such as ExxonMobil and Chevron as

evidence that refiners and fuel distributors - not consumers - have been the primary beneficiaries of the conflict with Iran and the waiver.

Norton contends that, despite claims that suspending the Jones Act would ease fuel costs, gasoline and diesel prices have not seen meaningful relief. Instead, he argues the waiver has allowed foreign-flag vessels to replace U.S.-flag ships in domestic trade, leaving American vessels idle, reducing employment opportunities for U.S. mariners, and undermining the long-term strength of the domestic maritime industry.

U.S. EXPANDS STRIKES ON IRAN TO PROTECT SHIPPING THROUGH STRAIT

The U.S. military intensified operations against Iran with a series of strikes this week aimed at reducing threats to commercial shipping in the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz. According to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), the latest attacks targeted Iranian command centers, missile and drone capabilities, air defense systems, coastal surveillance facilities, and other military assets linked to attacks on vessels transiting the region.

CENTCOM said the strikes were intended to further degrade Iran's ability to threaten civilian mariners and commercial ships operating through one of the world's busiest maritime chokepoints. Targets included facilities around the key port city of Bandar Abbas, while U.S. forces also struck coastal defense and cruise missile sites on Greater Tunb Island.

In a significant maritime milestone, the operation also marked the first combat use of unmanned surface vessels by U.S. forces. Multiple military-configured Saronic Corsair autonomous surface vessels (ASV) were employed in an attack on a submarine and ship maintenance facility at Bandar Abbas Naval Base. The 24-foot Corsair ASVs delivers a top speed of 35 knots, a payload capacity of 1,000 pounds, and an operational range of 1,000 nautical miles.

The strikes were designed to reduce Iran's capability to launch future attacks against commercial shipping and enhance security for merchant vessels navigating the region.

BRANCH AGENT IS ON THE JOB IN NORFOLK

Chris Nardone is on the job this week as the new Branch Agent in M.E.B.A.'s Norfolk Union hall. He is working alongside Government Fleet Rep. Ola Lassley who also handles dispatching duties. Chris will also assist on important Government Fleet work with our members in the Military Sealift Command Army Corps of Engineers and NOAA. Chris just finished up Chief Engineer duties on the Keystone-managed RRF vessel CAPE RACE that was deployed on a recently completed Government mission.

Chris is a 1990 Massachusetts Maritime Academy graduate who made application with the Union that same year. He immediately began sailing on a slew of Military Sealift Command ships and supported the war effort as a merchant mariner during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. In 2001, he was part of the engine crew aboard the MSC Hospital ship USNS COMFORT that responded to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and supported affected New Yorkers during that terrible time. He eventually amassed over 20 years of Chief Engineer experience including heading up engine rooms on 8 different M.E.B.A. contracted vessels.

A frequent face at Norfolk Union hall membership meetings, Chris is a solid Union man and stalwart M.E.B.A. member who was part of the 2021 M.E.B.A. Financial Review Committee. He was elected as a Delegate to the National M.E.B.A. in late 2024 and served at the M.E.B.A. National Convention in March 2025. Drop on by and say hello! You can also contact him at cnardone@mebaunion.org or call the hall.

DEC REPORT: M.E.B.A. GROUP II TO GROUP I LIST RELEASED

The Union issued its latest District Executive Committee report detailing 135 Group II individuals that have been admitted into Group I. Sailing time received by Headquarters by June 15, 2026 was used to determine eligibility. Only those in good standing were eligible. These individuals may apply for their Group I Seniority Card (shipping card) at their local branch office.

All members and applicants are reminded that it is the individual's obligation to complete the Group I application at their local Union hall or office. HQ does not obtain this information automatically.

The DEC has set a ratio of two Group I Deep-Sea individuals to each Deep-Sea billet. Group status within other bargaining units is determined after Deep Sea Bargaining Group 1 status has been decided. Reviews to determine if there are openings in Group I are done periodically and without notice. Generally it is done two times a year. If there are openings, applications of former Group I individuals and the sailing time for other Group II individuals is reviewed based on what is received at Headquarters on the review date. Names are available at the Union halls. Congratulations all!

M.E.B.A.-REPRESENTED MSC CREWS RECEIVE RARE HONOR

The Military Sealift Command (MSC) announced that crews for the fleet replenishment oiler USNS KANAWHA and the dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS WILLIAM McLEAN have been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation in recognition of their exceptional logistical support to U.S. Navy and allied forces during a recent deployment. Among the nation's highest honors for military units, the Presidential Unit Citation recognizes extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy. Civilian Mariners in the MSC fleet are represented by the M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU.

Over the course of a seven-month deployment, the two Combat Logistics Force vessels carried out 41 underway replenishments, transferring 3.4 million gallons of jet fuel, 5.2 million gallons of F-76 marine diesel fuel, and more than 2,300 pallets of cargo. The crews also received and processed over 160 pallets of aviation cargo, ensuring the strike group's aircraft remained mission-ready throughout the deployment. In addition, Civilian Mariners (CivMars) assigned to the vessels are receiving individual awards for their exceptional service during the deployment. Over its 77-year history, the MSC has conducted hundreds of thousands of underway replenishments, providing the logistics backbone that supports U.S. and coalition naval operations across the globe.

PIRACY AT 34 YEAR LOW

Maritime piracy and armed robbery incidents fell to their lowest level since 1992 in the first half of 2026, according to the latest report from ICC's International Maritime Bureau (IMB). Thirty-eight incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships were recorded in the first half of 2026, a decrease from 90 incidents for the same period in 2025 and 60 in 2024.

From January to June, 27 vessels were boarded, five hijacked, three fired upon and three attempted attacks. Despite the lowest mid-year figures since 1992, danger to crew continues with 67 crew taken

hostage, two threatened, and one injured. The IMB reports that Somali pirates were responsible for 94% of all crew taken hostage, demonstrating their continued capability to board all types of vessels and the escalation of activities in the waters off Somalia.

IMB Director Michael Howlett said, “The lowest mid-year level of reported piracy and armed robbery incidents since 1992 is encouraging and reflects the impact of sustained efforts by governments, law enforcement agencies and the maritime community. However, there is no room for complacency. Crew safety remains at risk, and the slight uptick of Somali piracy is a reminder that continued vigilance and regional cooperation remain essential to protect seafarers, global shipping and trade.”

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE M.E.B.A. G&W FUND

M.E.B.A.’s Good & Welfare Fund has been there for M.E.B.A. families following devastating storms, disasters, illness and death. The G&W is also committed to assisting those facing hardships due to newly implemented federal and state policies and regulations, providing support to those who may be adversely impacted by these changes. The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that the Fund is exempt from Federal Income tax. Contact a Union hall to see how you can help. We need to continually replenish the fund to allow additional assistance to members and retirees in times of hardship. In addition, you can support the G&W on the M.E.B.A.’s Member Payment and Update Portal (PUP) where you can also pay dues/service charges and contribute to the Political Action Fund.

Visit www.mebaunion.org to access the portal where you can also view and update your M.E.B.A. records, including contact information, credentials, and sea time. When paying dues or service charges, the site enables online payers to choose their preferred Union hall, ensuring that payments are correctly indexed and correlated for record-keeping purposes.

You’ll find the online Portal to be the most efficient and advantageous manner to remain in good standing and extend a needed monetary infusion to vital Union programs. Please consider making a contribution today to allow the Good & Welfare Fund to lend a hand to M.E.B.A. families now and into the future.

ADDITIONAL SPACE IN AUGUST COURSES AT CMES

The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that it has additional space available in the following courses:

- Industrial Networking - August 3–7
- Practical Electrical Troubleshooting - August 3–14
- Fast Rescue Boat - August 24–27
- Advanced Meteorology - August 17–21
- Advanced Stability - August 24–28
- Machine Shop Proficiency - August 24–September 4

Applications can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org) or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

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

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

Tuesday, August 4 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Portland, Maine@1200.**

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

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

Friday, August 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 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