

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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CMES INTERN PROGRAM READYING CADETS FOR SHIPPING CAREER

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School (CMES) welcomed more than 40 aspiring mariners for its annual Licensed Cadet Internship program that lit off last week. Scheduled from July 7 to July 25 this year, the program is a beacon for bright maritime academy cadets nationwide, offering them a valuable head start in their shipping careers. During the multi-week session, maritime academy cadets take valuable courses and work on essential shipping skills. By participating, they gain insights into the excellent career opportunities available through the M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha greeted assembled cadets at their orientation last week along with CMES Director Bryan Jennings. Union officials will join students at the conclusion of the program next week to answer questions and welcome many of these talented young mariners into the ranks.

Some of the courses that cadets take advantage of – and in most cases earn a Coast Guard certificate for – include High Voltage Safety, Combined Basic & Advanced IGF Code Operations (known as "LNG as a Fuel"), Fast Rescue Boat, Welding, Diesels, Marine Electrical Systems and the MSC CONMAR package which consists of Small Arms, Damage Control/Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense (CBRN) and Marine Environmental, Ships Reaction Force and Security Watchstander Basic & Advanced.

The Union offers an initiation fee discount for those cadets who complete the program in order to entice them into the ranks. In addition, the M.E.B.A. allows cadets who have already made application to the Union prior to attending the Cadet Internship program, to count the weekdays spent in the summer program as Group Time. This further supports these next generation mariners in getting a foothold in the Union to more effectively launch their shipping careers. About a dozen cadets attending this year's program have already made application and more are expected. CMES encourages members to direct interested cadets in their Junior or Senior year, as well as recent graduates, to reach out and seize the opportunity by contacting the School directly through their website www.mebaschool.org or by calling (410) 822-9600.

WHITE HOUSE SHIPBUILDING OFFICE AT NSA GUTTED, TRANSFERRED

Following another shake-up at the National Security Council, the newly formed White House Office of Shipbuilding - unveiled by President Donald Trump earlier this year - has been spun off, and its top official has departed. Reports indicate the office still exists but no longer resides under the NSC.

A White House spokesperson said the Office of Shipbuilding is being transferred to the Office of Management and Budget and that the State Department will also involve itself in shipbuilding matters.

Two top officials at the White House National Security Council (NSC), including its senior director for maritime and industrial capacity, Ian Bennett, departed their roles in recent days. Bennett was an ally of former National Security Adviser Michael Waltz, who is also a strong proponent of U.S.-flag shipping. Waltz was ousted from the position in late April following the “Signal Gate” scandal. Bennett was a lead part of White House efforts to revitalize American shipbuilding, restore domestic maritime capacity, and counter China’s growing dominance in global shipping. His exit comes just months after President Trump signed a high-profile executive order aimed at jumpstarting the U.S. shipbuilding sector and promoting American maritime interests - an initiative that drew rare bipartisan support. The White House had previously touted the creation of a maritime-focused office within the NSC as a sign of its commitment to the industry. But by early July, five of the seven officials in that office had left. With the latest shake-up, industry leaders are concerned that moving maritime policy out of the NSC could weaken coordination and long-term strategic planning at a time when global shipping lanes remain volatile.

White House spokesperson Anna Kelly reiterated that President Trump remains committed to U.S. shipbuilding - accusing prior administrations of “decades of neglect.” In a statement this week, she maintained that “President Trump is prioritizing this vital industry to strengthen our country’s economic and national security.”

MARITIME PRESENCE AT ANNUAL ASCA CONFERENCE

Numerous maritime unions, shipping companies, maritime academies and other U.S.-flag shipping entities came out in force last weekend to entice young students to consider the value of a career at sea. The M.E.B.A. and American Maritime Congress had a big presence at the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) conference as they promoted the value of our unique industry to over 5,000 school counseling professionals who descended on Long Beach, CA for the annual event that ran from Saturday to Tuesday. The conference is described as the premier event for in-depth school-counseling-related educational sessions allowing conferees to participate in four days of general and breakout sessions, as well as networking events.

M.E.B.A.’s Executive V.P. Max Alper along with L.A. Branch Agent Torey Zingales, L.A. Patrolman Jacob LeBeouf and Oakland Patrolman Chris Coombs dealt out M.E.B.A. swag and informed counselors about the lucrative opportunities in the maritime industry that are available to young men and women who are willing to work hard. They advocated for the M.E.B.A. and informed counselors that the diverse opportunities available through the Union and our contracted companies will help their students secure a career with great pay and benefits, flexibility and the knowledge that a democratic and transparent union will support and represent them. The American Maritime Congress sent a contingent to the conference including President Fair Kim and Government Affairs Manager Caitlyn Tierney and they worked in tandem with M.E.B.A. officials to promote the industry and union.

HOUSE COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION BILL ADVANCES

This week, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee pushed ahead the Coast Guard Authorization Act which provides additional resources for the U.S. Coast Guard to support critical missions. The funding earmarked in the legislation must still be appropriated by a separate act of Congress. The Authorization comes on the heels of the so-called “Big Beautiful Bill,” passed into law

last week, that allocates nearly \$25 billion to tackle long-overdue Coast Guard maintenance needs, upgrade infrastructure, and expand the service's fleet of ships and aircraft.

The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2025 authorizes appropriations for the Service through fiscal year 2029. These authorizations will support Coast Guard operations and the continued recapitalization of its historically underfunded cutter fleet, aviation assets, shoreside facilities, and IT capabilities. The bill modernizes the Coast Guard's acquisition process, increases transparency and accountability in the Service's recapitalization efforts, and opens a pathway to the adoption of next-generation autonomous technologies. The bill also creates greater parity with the other armed services, including the establishment of a Secretary of the Coast Guard and stronger protections for members of the Coast Guard from sexual assault and harassment, based on legislation the T&I Committee introduced last Congress following the Service's Operation Fouled Anchor. The legislation also strengthens U.S.-build requirements and improves accountability to better ensure a healthy, robust U.S. shipbuilding industry, while also making changes to maritime safety laws, amending requirements for merchant mariner credentials to facilitate an increase in the pool of qualified U.S. merchant mariners, increasing vessel safety, and improving regulatory processes.

Both the House and Senate versions of the bill need to clear their respective bodies and the reconciled bill is expected to be inserted into the forthcoming National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

MARAD EXPANDS MARINE HIGHWAY DESIGNATIONS

The Maritime Administration has designated 848 new miles of navigable waterways and approved 14 new sponsors for the U.S. Marine Highway Program (USMHP). The network, which now covers 27,139 miles across 35 designated routes, supports U.S. supply chains, critical infrastructure, and maritime workforce development. A key highlight of this expansion is the strengthening of the M-90 route, which runs 2,345 miles through the Great Lakes, connecting Minnesota to New York. Seven new sponsors have joined M-90: the State Departments of Transportation for Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, and New York, as well as the Ports of Indiana and the Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority.

WORRISOME SURGE IN SEAFARER ABANDONMENTS

The latest numbers released by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) reveal yet another disturbing surge in the abandonment of seafarers worldwide. Under the 2006 Maritime Labor Convention, a seafarer is considered abandoned if the shipowner fails to cover their repatriation costs, neglects to provide essential maintenance and support, or unilaterally severs ties with them, including withholding contractual wages for at least two months. Abandoned seafarers can experience months of unpaid wages, extremely poor onboard conditions, inadequate food and clean drinking water, and long periods of work without proper rest. In some cases, they are left completely stranded for months – even years – on end.

So far in 2025, at least 2,286 seafarers on 222 vessels have been left stranded, often without pay, food, or medical support. By comparison, at this point in 2024, already the worst year on record for seafarer abandonment, there had been 172 cases involving 1,838 seafarers and \$11.5 million in unpaid wages. A staggering 37% of all abandonment cases in 2025 have occurred in the Arab World – the highest proportion of any region globally. Thirty-four percent have taken place in Europe (the majority in Türkiye, yet to ratify the Maritime Labor Convention) - more than double the share of Asia Pacific, the next highest region.

The ITF warns that Gulf states, particularly the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and European states must do more to hold shipowners accountable and prevent abandonments in or near their ports. The Flags of Convenience (FOC) system remains central to the crisis. Vessels registered under FOC states, such as St. Kitts & Nevis (26), Tanzania (26) and Comoros (18) dominate the abandonment lists. These flags offer owners anonymity, deregulation and immunity from scrutiny – at the direct expense of seafarer rights. Nearly 75% of abandoned vessels in 2025 so far are under FOCs. These flag states routinely fail to enforce international obligations or pursue shipowners who dump their responsibilities at the first sign of financial trouble.

LNG BUNKERING OPPORTUNITY IN LONG BEACH ON SUNDAY

M.E.B.A. Engine Officers with Basic IGF have an upcoming opportunity for fuel loading observation in Long Beach, CA on July 20th. The Matson vessel KAIMANA HILA will be loading at Long Beach Terminal - at an exact time and location to be determined soon - allowing a limited amount of Engineers an opportunity for LNG bunkering observation.

Interested engineers with Basic IGF should contact L.A. Branch Agent Salvatore “Torey” Zingales immediately. Forward your name, MMC reference number and contact information to him ASAP so you can be placed on the visitor list. Space is limited. Torey can be contacted at szingales@mebaunion.org, at the hall by phone at (310) 548-7358, or by cell phone (216) 272-9144.

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

Monday, August 4 – **Boston@1200**; Seattle (Fife)**@1300**.

Tuesday, August 5 – **CMES@1430**; **Charleston@1400**; **Houston@1315**; **Oakland@1230**.

Wednesday, August 6 – **Jacksonville@1300**; **New Orleans@1315**; **Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting)** – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org

Thursday, August 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230**; **NY/NJ@1300**; **Norfolk@1300**; **Tampa@1300**.

Friday, August 8 – **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; 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