

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
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GOP HOUSE LEADERS URGE PRESIDENT TO LET JONES ACT WAIVER EXPIRE

Over 50 House GOP Members including four of the highest-ranking Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives have called on President Trump to allow the current Jones Act waiver to expire as scheduled on Aug. 16, arguing that extending the waiver would undermine American maritime jobs and weaken the nation's domestic shipping industry.

In a letter to the President, 52 House Republican Members of Congress including House Speaker Mike Johnson, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer, and House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves signed onto the letter urging the President to uphold the Jones Act and support U.S.-flag shipping. The lawmakers stressed that the Jones Act remains the nation's primary safeguard against foreign control of domestic waterborne commerce by requiring cargo moved between U.S. ports to be carried on American-built, American-owned, American-crewed, and American-flagged vessels. They noted that the law supports hundreds of thousands of American jobs while ensuring a reliable domestic fleet capable of transporting essential cargoes.

In the letter, they argued that the waiver has allowed foreign-flag vessels to carry domestic cargo even when qualified U.S.-flag ships were available, diverting business from American operators and mariners while discouraging investment in the U.S. maritime industry. Citing Maritime Administration data, they noted that approximately 95 percent of completed waiver voyages have primarily benefited foreign shipping companies that neither pay U.S. taxes nor operate under U.S. immigration laws. They warned that the waiver has effectively become a loophole that enables foreign competitors — including those from adversarial nations — to gain a greater foothold in America's domestic maritime trade. They asked that the waiver be allowed to expire on August 16, 2026. The letter has been posted on the M.E.B.A. homepage.

SAVE THE JONES ACT!

The conflict with Iran has ended. A peace agreement is in place. Yet the Jones Act, a critical statute for American-flag shipping, is still being sidelined. That makes no sense. The Administration justified the Jones Act waiver as a temporary emergency measure. With the emergency over, the legal and policy rationale for allowing foreign vessels to perform domestic transportation work has disappeared. It is

time for the waiver to end. Waiving the Jones Act provided no measurable benefit to American consumers while allowing foreign vessels to carry cargoes that could have been transported by U.S.-flagships or other domestic transportation networks. Fuel prices continue to be driven by global crude oil markets, not by the temporary suspension of Jones Act requirements. At the same time, foreign operators — including vessels linked to Chinese interests — have been allowed to participate in domestic trades that normally support American jobs, shipyards, and maritime investment. Industry stakeholders report lost business opportunities and uncertainty for U.S. vessel operators and mariners.

The decision to prematurely extend the Jones Act waiver to a total of 150 days allows foreign interests to steal American shipping jobs. It doesn't save Americans any money at the gas pump and flies in the face of the President's stated goal to revitalize U.S.-flag shipping. The overly-broad waiver permits foreign-flagged ships to move oil, liquefied natural gas, fertilizer, coal, and over 600 other products between U.S. ports, a privilege that should be reserved for Americans, not foreign interests who have happily swooped in to pilfer our jobs. Broad waivers discourage investment in American vessels, weaken the business case for maintaining U.S.-flag operations, erode shipyard demand and send the wrong signal to mariners considering careers at sea. Policymakers are urged to return to the longstanding practice of narrowly tailored, case-by-case waivers rather than relying on an overly expansive exemption.

We need every mariner, retiree, family member, and supporter of the American maritime industry to make their voice heard. Tell your Senators and Representative that you support the Jones Act and oppose policies that outsource American shipping jobs to foreign interests. You can express your disgust with the waiver by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/freetheja>. The link will bring you to a customizable letter that will let your Member of Congress know that it is not acceptable to give away the U.S.-flag fleet to foreign interests. Be sure to select "Enable OneClick Echo" so your Senators and Representative receive a follow-up message 72 hours later.

The Jones Act protects American jobs, American ships, American shipyards, and American national security. Congress needs to hear from the people whose livelihoods depend on it.

NEW REPORT CONFIRMS FUTILITY OF WAIVER

A new Jones Act 2026 Waiver After Action Report" from Navigistics Consulting concludes that the Trump Administration's 150-day blanket Jones Act waiver has failed to deliver its promised benefits while undermining the U.S. maritime industry. Analyzing 78 waiver voyages and 659 cargo movements using U.S. Maritime Administration (MarAd) data, the report found no evidence that any voyage met the legal standard of military necessity, despite that being the sole justification for a Jones Act waiver. It also determined that U.S.-flag vessels were available for nearly 87 percent of qualifying voyages, yet foreign-flag ships - including many built in or controlled by China - were permitted to carry domestic cargo instead.

The study further found no measurable reduction in gasoline prices attributable to the waiver, noting that Jones Act vessels were often more cost-effective than foreign competitors and that only a small percentage of U.S. gasoline moves by ship. Adding to the report's criticisms, the United States continued exporting large volumes of petroleum products during the period in which the waiver was justified as necessary to address domestic supply concerns. With the waiver scheduled to expire on August 17, the report adds to growing calls from American mariners, labor organizations, and

maritime advocates to allow it to lapse and restore full enforcement of the Jones Act in support of U.S.-flag vessels, American shipyards, and the nation's maritime workforce.

REPORT CITES DIRE NEED FOR QUALIFIED MARINERS

A new report issued by two international shipping organizations forecasts that there will be a need for an additional 113,735 officers by 2030 to operate the world merchant fleet, given the growing demand for STCW certified officers. BIMCO, the world's largest international shipping association, and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), the principal international trade association for the global shipping industry, recently put out its Seafarer Workforce Report for 2026, a report that is issued every five years.

It estimates that 2.57 million seafarers currently serve the global fleet, operating 85,148 merchant ships around the globe. The report estimates that 2026 will see a shortage of 39,100 STCW certified officers and a surplus of 56,890 ratings. To meet the future demand, it is estimated that an additional 22,747 officers and 8,475 ratings will need to join the workforce each year until 2030, representing an average annual increase of 2.0% and 0.5% respectively. Since the 2021 report, demand for STCW certified seafarers has increased by 35%. The growth is likely driven by the expansion of the global merchant fleet and the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Seafarers are the backbone of global trade, and this report reinforces just how important they are to keeping the world economy moving, especially in an increasingly fragmented world. As shipping continues to evolve, attracting more people to careers in maritime is essential. We must continue our long-standing efforts to engage with young people early and build a strong pipeline of future talent,” said ICS Secretary General Thomas Kazakos.

LAWMAKER CALLS ON MSC HOSPITAL SHIP DEPLOYMENT TO AID VENEZUELAN

Following the devastating earthquakes that struck northern Venezuela, U.S. Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-FL-23) is urging Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth to deploy either the USNS COMFORT or USNS MERCY hospital ships to provide humanitarian assistance following the disaster, which so far has claimed more than 2,300 lives, injured thousands, and left thousands of others missing. As the beleaguered country sifts through the rubble, many more deaths and injuries are feared to be discovered.

M.E.B.A. represents the civilian mariner engine officers serving aboard both hospital ships, which are operated by the Military Sealift Command. Throughout the years, M.E.B.A. engine officers aboard COMFORT and MERCY have participated in numerous humanitarian and disaster-response operations around the globe, providing the engineering expertise that keeps these floating hospitals fully operational. Their work has supported missions ranging from earthquake and hurricane relief to medical outreach and emergency response, touching countless lives and demonstrating the vital role U.S. merchant mariners play in advancing America's humanitarian mission.

In his letter, Moskowitz noted that the hospital ships are uniquely equipped to provide emergency surgery, intensive care, diagnostic services, and inpatient treatment, citing the successful deployment of USNS COMFORT following the 2010 Haiti earthquake as an example of their lifesaving capabilities. The administration has not announced whether either vessel would be deployed.

GAO: COAST GUARD REFORM NEEDS STRONGER WORKFORCE PLANNING & ACCOUNTABILITY

A new Government Accountability Office report says the Coast Guard's ongoing modernization effort, Force Design 2028, still lacks clear goals and meaningful ways to measure success despite receiving billions in funding. Force Design 2028 is a Coast Guard modernization initiative focusing on reorganizing the service, improving personnel management, accelerating acquisitions, and deploying new technology. Part of the effort emphasizes fixing workforce shortages and modernizing technology. If successful, that could improve staffing and IT systems at the National Maritime Center, potentially reducing delays in issuing and renewing Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMCs).

But the GAO found the service has repeatedly fallen short in assessing workforce needs — a critical issue for Coast Guard missions that directly affect mariner credentialing, vessel inspections, marine safety, and regulatory oversight. The report recommends the Coast Guard establish a formal evaluation plan with measurable performance standards to ensure reforms improve organization, personnel, technology, and acquisition programs while strengthening accountability.

HALLS CLOSED FRIDAY FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY; WEST HALLS CLOSED ON MONDAY FOR BLOODY THURSDAY

The halls will be closed tomorrow (Friday, July 3) as it is the Federal day off for Independence Day. West Coast halls will continue to be shuttered on Monday, July 6th in observance of “Bloody Thursday.” Bloody Thursday commemorates the 1934 longshoremen labor action led by Harry Bridges that culminated in street fighting and clashes with police. Hundreds were injured and several were killed in the riots that came to a head on July 5, 1934. Following a general strike and federal intervention, the longshoremen won a coast-wide contract, union hiring halls, and various improvements to wages and conditions.

As a note, because of the West Coast holiday, the Seattle membership meeting, normally on a Monday, has been moved to Tuesday, July 7th at the regular time.

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

Monday, July 6 – **Bloody Thursday (Observed) - West Coast Halls Closed - Boston@1200.**

Tuesday, July 7 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Portland, Maine@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Wednesday, July 8 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, July 9 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, July 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.***