

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

*The Official Union Newsletter*



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### **McCain Jones Act Repeal Bill Would Be A Boon For Foreign-Flag Interests**

Senator John McCain (R-AZ) was diagnosed with brain cancer this week after a tumor was found following surgery to remove a blood clot. But just before he left the Senate, he launched another effort to torpedo the Jones Act with the introduction of new legislation that is being welcomed by foreign interests.

S. 1561, the "Open America's Waters Act of 2017," would repeal the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (Jones Act) surrendering U.S. mariner jobs to foreign counterparts and waving the white flag on the U.S. Merchant Marine. The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

The Senator, a long-time Jones Act opponent called the statute "an archaic and burdensome law that hinders free trade, stifles the economy, and ultimately harms consumers...The protectionist mentality embodied by the Jones Act directly contradicts the lessons we have learned about the benefits of a free and open market. Free trade expands economic growth, creates jobs, and lowers costs for consumers."

He has made numerous attempts to compromise the Jones Act in the past, all of which have been batted down by lawmakers on both sides of the aisle who understand the importance of a U.S.-flag Merchant Marine to this nation's economy and national defense.

AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department issued a statement some years ago (regarding another misguided McCain proposal) that is appropriate to revisit in response to the current legislation: "It is puzzling when lawmakers pursue legislative proposals that so blatantly harm our national interests and along the way threaten the types of middle class jobs that elude far too many Americans. We've seen bad public policy decisions hollow out enough strategically important American industries and cut good jobs. It's time to end this misguided war against U.S. maritime and the Jones Act."

Along with the blight on our U.S. flag fleet and American mariners stemming from a repeal, the negative implications on the nation's security would be inestimable. The U.S. Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are already overburdened with current enforcement requirements. A repeal would open the floodgates for foreign vessels and mariners on our coastlines and inner waterways necessitating a nightmare array of concerns that those agencies aren't equipped

to contain. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft has noted that, "If we have foreign-flag vessels doing coastalized trade, what are the safety standards, what are the maritime pollution...standards, how are they in compliance with the same standards that we apply to our U.S. fleet? I think, at the end of the day [a weakening of the Jones Act] will put our entire U.S. fleet in jeopardy," the Commandant noted.

The M.E.B.A. legislative department, in alliance with maritime industry proponents, remain vigilant against attacks on U.S.-flag interests and will continue to fight against such incursions. M.E.B.A. members, retirees and applicants can help assist our battle to preserve U.S.-flag mariner jobs by supporting the M.E.B.A. Political Action Fund. Visit your local Union hall or use the M.E.B.A. website to make a contribution!

### **FULL FUNDING FOR MSP IN HOUSE BILL**

On Monday the 17<sup>th</sup>, the House Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year 2018 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development funding bill which includes money for the Department of Transportation as well as the Maritime Security Program. We are pleased to report that the bill includes full funding for the MSP.

Over the years, M.E.B.A. and U.S. shipping entities have ensured that Members of Congress comprehend the importance of this crucial program. This is particularly important because the President's recently released budget request recommended underfunding the MSP by \$90 million. It is encouraging that an educated Congress has signaled that they understand the need for U.S.-flag shipping and a fully funded MSP. While the legislation must be considered by the Senate and signed by the President, we remain optimistic that the final spending bill will include the fully authorized amount.

### **WORKING GROUPS TO CONSIDER CHOPPING BURDENSOME COAST GUARD REGS**

The Coast Guard announced that five of its advisory committees will assist the agency in identifying existing regulations and guidance for possible repeal, replacement, or modification. The committees will hold teleconferences open to the public and M.E.B.A. members may want to get involved. Times and dates follow: Towing Safety Advisory Committee - August 2, 2017, from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., EDT. To register for the teleconference, contact Lt. Cmdr. William Nabach at (202) 372-1386 or email [william.a.nabach@uscg.mil](mailto:william.a.nabach@uscg.mil). Chemical Transportation Advisory Committee - August 2, 2017, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., EDT. To register for the teleconference, contact Lt. Jake Lobb at (202) 372-1428 or email [jake.r.lobb@uscg.mil](mailto:jake.r.lobb@uscg.mil). National Offshore Safety Advisory Committee - August 3, 2017, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., EDT. To register for the teleconference, contact Mr. Patrick Clark at (202) 372-1358 or email [patrick.w.clark@uscg.mil](mailto:patrick.w.clark@uscg.mil). Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee - August 8, 2017, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., EDT. To register for the teleconference, contact Lt.j.g. James Fortin at (202) 372-1128 or email [james.l.fortin@uscg.mil](mailto:james.l.fortin@uscg.mil). Merchant Mariner Medical Advisory Committee - August 9, 2017, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., EDT. To register for the teleconference, contact Lt.j.g. James Fortin at (202) 372-1128 or email [james.l.fortin@uscg.mil](mailto:james.l.fortin@uscg.mil).

### **WILLIS TO HEAD UP TTD AS WYTKIND DEPARTS**

Transportation Trades Department (AFL-CIO) Secretary-Treasurer Larry Willis will take over the organization after longtime President Ed Wytkind stepped down from the post this week. Willis is Wytkind's anointed successor who was unanimously approved by the TTD Executive Committee at

a meeting on Tuesday. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents 32 unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries.

Wytkind was lauded by the Committee that passed a resolution honoring his service during which he fortified the TTD into a “strong, results-driven advocacy organization” and expanded the member unions from 18 to 32. Wytkind will continue to work with the labor movement as an advisor to the leadership of the national AFL-CIO. The Committee said that Wytkind helped position TTD as a significant player in the transportation and labor arenas, and solidified the organization’s reputation on Capitol Hill and in the executive branch as a strong voice and effective advocate on major transportation policy debates.

Willis has served as TTD’s Secretary-Treasurer since 2010 and has been with the organization for nearly 20 years. “I am honored to have the support of America’s transportation labor leaders,” he said. “I look forward to advancing the interests of the men and women who work on the frontlines of our nation’s transportation system as President of TTD. Under Ed’s direction, we have become a leader in advocating for policies that empower working people and strengthen and expand our vast transportation network.”

Elected to the vacated Secretary-Treasurer post left by Willis is Greg Regan who has worked with TTD for six years, following experience as a top staffer for a senior member of Congress. “Serving TTD as Secretary-Treasurer is truly an honor, and I thank the Executive Committee for this opportunity,” Regan said. “I am proud to stand with and for those who make a living by keeping this country moving, and look forward to continuing to work with TTD’s unions to advance our common agenda.”

### **IMB REPORTS 87 PIRACY INCIDENTS IN FIRST HALF OF 2017**

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has reported that there have been 87 incidents involving piracy and armed robbery in the first six months of 2017, down from 97 over the same period last year. The report shows that 63 ships were boarded with eight attacks ending in failure. Four ships were actually hijacked and 12 ships were fired upon by pirates. A total of 63 crew members were taken hostage during the period. Indonesia, Nigeria, Somalia and Venezuela remain hot spots for incidents of piracy with Nigerian waters most dangerous by number of incidents. Somalia has seen a decrease in attacks but seven incidents were still reported off that country’s coast.

### **UN CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF LABOR BROTHER**

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention is calling for the immediate release of the President of the 800,000 member Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) Brother Han San-gyun. Han is serving a three-year jail sentence for leading peaceful protests against the Sewol ferry accident and the country’s labor flexibilization policies. The UN said the imprisonment of Han is “arbitrary and his immediate release is the only remedy.” His pardoning now falls to the new President of South Korea Moon Jae-in who is open to the idea and has expressed sympathies with Korean workers. The opportunity to pardon Han is set to for August 15, the National Liberation Day of Korea.

### **HARRY BRIDGES’S STRUGGLE PUT TO PAPER**

The twenty-year journey of a labor leader’s struggle to stay grounded in America has seen its latest incarnation. *Burning Bridges: America’s 20-Year Crusade to Deport Labor Leader Harry Bridges* was released and is available at booksellers nationwide. Written by lawyer and law professor Peter Afrasiabi, the

author's background helps bring fresh insight and detail about the legal proceedings authorities brought against Bridges in their perpetual attempts to deport the Australian-born labor leader. As the labor community knows, Bridges helped establish the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) in 1937 and led the union for over 40 years. He led workers during labor unrest on the San Francisco waterfront in 1934 that erupted into the events known as "Bloody Thursday" when the police opened fire onto striking workers, killing several.

Afrasiabi reveals previously-unreleased FBI and National Archive documents that help dissect the inner workings of the four Bridges' trials and make this account of the ordeal uncommon to any other retelling. The book itself takes a deep dive into the nitty gritty of what really happened in those trials as well as illustrating the roles of the FBI, judges, jury, lawyers, and the court system and how they either tried to help or doom Harry Bridges throughout all four trials. The book has been optioned as a major motion picture.

### **IMPENDING NLRB POWER SHIFT**

Once confirmed, President Trump's nominees for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) will regain a Republican majority on the Board for the first time since 2007. The two nominees, lawyers Marvin Kaplan and William Emanuel, have been heavily criticized by the AFL-CIO which believes the resumes of the nominees directly conflict with the mission of the NLRB.

"Marvin Kaplan has never practiced labor law, and his experience comes from crafting legislation for politicians to rig the rules against working people," AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said. "William Emanuel has a long record of practicing labor law on behalf of employers, most recently at one of the most infamous union-busting law firms in the country." A Senate Committee advanced the nominations in a 12-11 vote and will advance to the full Senate for a final vote.

### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS**

Monday, August 7 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;  
Tuesday, August 8 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;  
Wednesday, August 9 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;  
Thursday, August 10 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;  
Friday, August 11 - Honolulu@1100.

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*The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven 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](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact: Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org)*