

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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CONGRESS URGED TO REJECT BID TO FREEZE "SHIP AMERICAN" RULES

The M.E.B.A., as part of both the Transportation Trades Department (AFL-CIO) and USA Maritime, is urging Congress to reject an Idaho Senator's proposal to kill U.S.-flag cargo preference rules in the name of cost savings. Senator Jim Risch (R-ID) is promoting an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act to eliminate the requirement that at least 50% of international food aid cargoes be carried on U.S.-flag ships. Cargo preference statutes are crucial to the U.S.-flag shipping industry and the pool of qualified American mariners. The drastic reduction of cargoes for U.S.-flag shipping over the past decade along with the lowering of the food aid cargo preference level from 75% to 50% in 2012 helped bring about a precipitous reduction in the internationally-trading U.S.-flag fleet as ships continue to flag out from the Stars and Stripes. Continued erosion of the mariner pool will continue to complicate the nation's ability to fulfill DOD sealift requirements.

In a letter signed by the M.E.B.A., TTD noted that Senate Amendment 265 would waive "Ship American rules worldwide to the detriment of the U.S. maritime workforce. To be clear, this means that the federal government would cede U.S. food aid and shipping interests to foreign flag ships by eliminating 100% of the U.S. ships that are available to transport food-aid at fair and reasonable rates."

Instead, TTD said that efforts should be undertaken to strengthen cargo preference laws that "support our national security, preparedness for humanitarian missions, and good middle-class jobs."

TTD represents 37 transportation labor unions and USA Maritime is a coalition of U.S. ship operators, maritime labor organizations, and maritime trade associations. M.E.B.A is part of both organizations.

USA Maritime said that U.S. taxpayer money should benefit U.S. workers when possible. They noted, "Waiving cargo preference will take away American jobs and gives American taxpayer dollars to foreign shipping companies, but more critically, enactment of the waiver will seriously erode the security of our nation's military logistics capability through attrition, as U.S. companies will be forced out of business, American mariners will lose jobs, and the DoD will be forced to outsource its transportation needs to unreliable foreign corporations."

NEW OPTIMISM IN EFFORTS FOR STATEN ISLAND FERRY CONTRACT

New York City Mayor Eric Adams' told attendees at a town hall meeting this week that progress is being made in talks and he expects his administration to reach contract terms for mariners sailing on the Staten Island Ferries.

The M.E.B.A. represents all five officer titles at the Staten Island Ferry (Captain, Chief Engineer, Marine Engineer, Assistant Captain and Mate) and all of those titles have been without a contract for over 13 years. Ferry mariners are paid much less than industry wages which has caused a mariner exodus over the years. The City's mismanagement has resulted in a deterioration of the safety culture and staffing shortages leading to service disruptions.

Commenting about ongoing contract talks at the town hall event at Curtis High School in Staten Island, NY this week, Mayor Adams noted, "We had a great conversation today. We're really looking at it, so I'm engaged. We got to get this settled," he said. "These are blue-collar workers. It's a blue-collar borough, and the ferry's a major way of moving in and out of the boroughs. We're going to get this resolved."

M.E.B.A. mariners working in the Ferry system staged an informational picket outside the event bringing attention to the City's failure to fairly compensate the mariners, a sentiment echoed by a great many New Yorkers and local politicians.

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha, a former Staten Island Ferry Shop Steward struck a positive tone following the Mayor's comments. "We are pleased Mayor Adams is now at the helm and onboard with our negotiations and is steering us toward a resolution on the long outstanding labor contract. We deeply appreciate his leadership and commitment to our professional mariner crew and the great borough of Staten Island," he said. "We know he is finally the Mayor to get stuff done on the ferry."

THERE WILL BE A NEW IMO LEADER IN 2024

Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco of the Republic of Panama has been elected as the next secretary-general of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). His four-term will begin on January 1st, 2024 succeeding the outgoing Kitack Lim who is completing his second four-year term, the maximum.

Dominguez has a distinguished background within the IMO, currently holding the position of director of the Marine Environment Division. He previously served as the director of the Administrative Division and as the chief of staff. His prior experience with the Panama Maritime Authority and representation at the IMO further adds to his suitability for the role.

The shipping industry is facing significant challenges in meeting environmental targets for 2030, 2040, and 2050. The election of Dominguez holds historical significance for Panama - he is the first Latin American to assume the top position at the UN body. His election took place shortly after the IMO agreed on a revised strategy to decarbonize the global shipping industry, setting ambitious targets for reducing emissions by specific percentages in the coming years.

UNIONS POWER AMERICA – CONTEST & SWEEPSTAKES – ENTER NOW!!!!

Union Plus is running its “Unions Power America” contest and sweepstakes in which they will award over \$236,000 in prizes to union members through August 17th. Grand prize winners will receive as much as \$40,000. You can enter at unionplus.org/laborday The Contest runs between July 6–26. To enter, submit a story about how you or a union member you admire powers America. Union Plus is awarding \$140,000 total in cash prizes. The Sweepstakes runs from July 27 to August 17. It only takes a moment to enter, but if you complete quick online activities, you’ll earn additional entries. They’re awarding \$80,000 total in cash prizes. Winners will be announced on Labor Day - September 4.

Union Plus programs, which are available to M.E.B.A. members, applicants, retirees and our affiliates, provide a vast range of money-saving benefits and services. The M.E.B.A. is enrolled in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from life insurance to auto services discounts. Visit unionplus.org/laborday to access the entry form and for more details.

MAKE SURE YOUR DOCUMENTS ARE IN ORDER FOR JOB CALL!

It is the responsibility of members and applicants to have all their necessary documentation in-hand ahead of time for job call. Those who have recently upgraded their license should make sure their STCW reflects the upgrade. Your license, passport and other important documents should be valid for at least six months from the time you begin working aboard ship. Your drug-free certificates have to be valid at least until the day you join your ship. Check your expiration dates!

If flying with your documents on the way to a hall, double-check that you haven’t left any essential documents at home and make sure to keep your docs with you in your carry-on luggage. The primary documents you’ll need include your Merchant Mariner Credential with current STCW, VSO or VPDSO endorsement, TWIC, Passport, USCG Medical Certificate, Annual M.E.B.A. physical card, Drug-free Certificate or Drug-Free Letter, Group Card, Fit-for-Duty, Dues Receipt and proof of vaccination(s). Permanent or relief employees should get their company clearance to the hall ahead of time. Work with the Military Sealift Command will require security clearances.

As you should know, no one can be dispatched to a job while on vacation or while receiving a paid vacation benefit without a waiver. The Union requires a return-to-work date when clearing for a vessel so make sure you have your vacation pay and vacation carry over statements, shipping discharge and port relief pay voucher for verification of return to work. It should also be noted that failure to obtain prior Union permission to return to work early, before the return-to-work date as listed on your carry-over or vacation statement, will subject you to a penalty.

Remember, a member or applicant cannot be dispatched for a job requiring STCW credentials if the Coast Guard Medical Certificate is due to expire prior to the completion of the job called. Members are encouraged to have their paperwork for the USCG Medical Certificate completed and to submit it for renewal at every annual physical in order to avoid an issue at job call. Certain jobs require proof of benzene or shot records, MSC Physical and MSC courses, GMDSS, High Voltage/Marine Propulsion, Crowd Control, Welding, or other courses to satisfy company requirements.

Mariners are reminded to keep their vaccination records with them when sailing – especially when shipping onboard MSC-contracted vessels. Keep your documents with you at all times when

travelling and NEVER leave them in your car. If unsure what is required, it is a good idea to check with an M.E.B.A. clinic. If you have questions about your documents, direct them to your local hall.

SAG-AFTRA MEMBERS DESERVE A FAIR CONTRACT

On Thursday, the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) began its first strike against film and TV companies in over four decades. SAG-AFTRA represents over 160,000 union members looking for a fair contract during a critical moment in the industry's history. The union is looking for reasonable contract language governing revenue sharing for streaming services, artificial intelligence and general increases to keep up with inflation.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler issued a statement in solidarity with SAG-AFTRA, which besides actors, includes announcers, broadcast journalists, dancers, DJs, news writers, news editors, program hosts, puppeteers, recording artists, singers, stunt performers, voiceover artists and other media professionals. They are bargaining with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers which includes major studios and streamers such as Amazon and MGM, Apple, NBC Universal, Disney, which owns ABC and Fox, Netflix, Paramount and CBS, Sony, and Warner Bros.

President Shuler noted, "Artificial intelligence and other new technologies should not be used to displace or replace real people and workers. We must have a say in how our likeness and work are used, and we must share in the wealth we help to create. These are the reasonable demands of a 21st century contract...The power of America's labor movement is not to be underestimated, and we are determined to win this fight for all working people."

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

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; Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, August 10 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, August 11 – **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. 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.