

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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In this issue//House Passes Offshore Wind Provision, SA/SH Reform as Part of NDAA//MarAd Program Supports Next Generation Mariners//CMES Text Alert System//BST Revalidation Shortened//PASS President Guests on Labor Podcast//Chipotle Shuttles Augusta Restaurant after Organizing Efforts//CEO to Worker Pay Ratio Continues to Rise//Union Election Petitions are Up//

HOUSE PASSES OFFSHORE WIND MARINER PROVISION, SA/SH REFORMS AS PART OF NDAA

Late last week, the House of Representatives passed the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act which includes the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022. The NDAA is an annual bill establishing defense priorities and sets guidelines for military-related spending. Among many other items, the 2022 NDAA calls for full funding of the Maritime Security Program, Tanker Security Program and directs the Maritime Administration to begin plans for the design of a new U.S.-built roll-on/roll-off vessel for use in the National Defense Reserve Fleet. Subject to the availability of appropriations, the NDAA would direct MarAd to pursue the construction of up to 10 such vessels, with the construction of the first beginning as soon as FY 2024. MarAd carried out a similar role in the development of the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel program, the newbuild Academy ships being constructed at Philly Shipyard. The NDAA is a must-pass bill but must still gain Senate approval and the President's signature before becoming law.

The Coast Guard bill authorizes funding to enhance Coast Guard operations and help the service replace and modernize its cutters, as well as shoreside and cyber infrastructure. It also includes major reforms to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment in the maritime industry.

Among other items, the Coast Guard bill authorizes funding for a desperately needed Great Lakes icebreaker and includes a provision championed by Rep. Don Young to allow the Coast Guard to keep Russian vessels out of U.S. waters during the ongoing Ukraine crisis.

Offshore Wind Provision Would Benefit U.S. Mariners, Penalize Flag-of-Convenience Schemes

The Coast Guard bill also includes a provision requiring mariners serving on foreign-flagged vessels on the Outer Continental Shelf to be either U.S. citizens or citizens of the nation where the vessel is flagged. Current law requires that all vessels, rigs, platforms, or other offshore structures be manned by U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents, but the law has been exploited and a loophole has allowed foreign companies to utilize low-wage foreign mariners for this work, allowing them to skirt U.S. taxes and labor laws.

The provision was championed by Reps. Garret Graves (R-LA) and John Garamendi (D-CA) who noted that it "closes an egregious Jones Act loophole so that foreign-flagged vessels are held to the

same high standards as US-flagged vessels developing our nation's offshore energy resources, including for offshore wind projects." M.E.B.A. continues to work with our industry and government partners to explore opportunities in this emergent industry.

However, some entities such as the Sierra Club and the American Clean Power Association (ACPA) say that Americans don't have the workforce or fleet requirements needed for this nascent industry and would therefore stunt its development. ACPA CEO Heather Zichal said that her organization is "extremely concerned about the maritime crewing provision as it will cripple the development of the American offshore wind industry."

But an alliance of maritime labor unions including the M.E.B.A. point out that it's crucial that American workers get in on the ground floor of budding offshore wind efforts so that the U.S. can begin ramping up its workforce to be players in this lucrative new industry. A letter penned to Senate Commerce Committee leaders signed by the M.E.B.A., along with the ARA, SUP, AMO, MM&P, MFOW and the SIU, appealed to Senators to ensure that the American offshore wind industry develops without the damaging flag-of-convenience system that has "decimated" the U.S.-flag shipping industry. The letter stated, "we strongly believe that the industry itself represents a golden opportunity to both ensure that long-term investments in the American maritime workforce will be made to provide the highly-skilled, quality training necessary to crew and operate the specialized offshore vessels that will help meet the Administration's clean energy goals, as well as to increase the overall number of trained mariners in the workforce."

They noted that the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School and other maritime union educational facilities can provide the requisite training, once a training regime is approved, to meet the mariner demands of the burgeoning industry. "We reaffirm our commitment," the unions noted, "to do all we can to promote the development and operation of this new industry and are convinced that a formal, collaborative relationship between our unions and the wind energy industry can and will ensure that their projects will proceed with American mariners."

MARAD PROGRAM HELPS SINGLE OUT NEXT GENERATION MARINERS

A Maritime Administration program is aiding the scholarly advancement of budding young mariners and assisting their transition into the industry. MarAd administers the Centers of Excellence (CoE) program which supports community/technical colleges and maritime training centers that prepare Americans for careers in the maritime industry. Through the program, MarAd can enter into cooperative agreements with designated facilities to advance recruitment efforts, award student credit for military service, and receive surplus equipment or temporary use of MarAd vessels.

"These Centers of Excellence are developing the next generation of the maritime workforce and improving training in the maritime industry," said Maritime Administrator Ann Phillips.

MarAd pointed out that the effort "expands equitable opportunities for good paying jobs and prepares workers for successful future careers in the maritime industry."

They are currently accepting applications for CoE designations. More information can be sought from Centers of Excellence Program Manager Gerard Wall at gerard.wall@dot.gov or (202) 366-7273.

CMES SETS UP TEXT ALERT SYSTEM – SIGN UP NOW!

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School has launched a text message alert system available to the M.E.B.A. membership. Text alerts will include announcement about recently added classes, open spots on a roster, availability of the next year’s course schedule, and other items of interest.

To start receiving texts, members must opt-in by texting CMES to (410) 822-9600. This is completely voluntary, and members may opt-out at any time by replying STOP to the last text they received. The CMES will also continue to distribute notices via All Ports Bulletins, the Telex Times, and on the School’s website. By texting CMES, you agree to receive automated promotional/informational messages from the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School. This agreement is not a condition of registration or any other transaction from the school. Terms and the Privacy Policy can be found at mebaschool.org/terms. Message frequency varies.

CMES BASIC SAFETY TRAINING REVALIDATION SHORTENED TO THREE DAYS

The one-week BST Revalidation course at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School, which includes Advanced Fire Fighting Revalidation and Basic Training Revalidation, has been shortened to 3 days. This course will now run Monday – Wednesday.

Please Note: Students will be in class ALL DAY on Wednesday. Flights home should be scheduled for Thursday. Applications can be sent via the CMES website, faxed to (410) 822-7220, or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

PASS PRESIDENT TALKS WORKER PRIORITIES ON PODCAST

AFL-CIO’s “Daily Brief” reported that the President of M.E.B.A. affiliate Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS) was the featured guest on last Friday’s America’s Work Force Union Podcast. PASS represents more than 11,000 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Defense Department workers throughout the air traffic control system.

On the podcast, PASS National President David Spero talked about his labor background before touching on a series of issue important to his union including staffing, training, privatization, funding and contract negotiations. President Spero also talked about the impact of the 2018–2019 government shutdown on federal workers’ families and the Aviation Funding Stability Act of 2021 (H.R. 4042) that would keep Federal Aviation Administration employees paid for up to 30 days in the event of another shutdown. Check out this link to listen to the podcast (Spero begins at 12:48) <https://tinyurl.com/passmeba>

NO MORE CHIPOTLE! FRANCHISE SHUTTERS MAINE LOCATION AFTER UNIONIZING EFFORTS

Workers in the midst of a unionizing effort in Augusta, Maine found themselves without a job on Tuesday when Chipotle Mexican Grill announced that the store would be shuttered.

A majority of the 20 workers at the Augusta Chipotle filed a union representation petition last month with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) seeking to become an independent union called “Chipotle United.” None of Chipotle’s 3,000+ stores around the country are union and the company has vehemently opposed any organizing efforts.

Workers there are angry with unsafe working conditions and had called for the company to hire more staff and offer better training and support for employees. In a letter to management, the Augusta workers complained that food safety was being compromised due to short staffing and lack of training. Chipotle worker Brandi McNease described a number of unsafe conditions, including gas leaks, equipment that had to be used improperly to bypass safety switches, lights falling out of the ceiling, exposed wires by the dish sink and drains “so clogged or slow moving the smell travels throughout the kitchen and into the front of the house.” Workers also complained that there has been the potential of cross contamination of food and that they were told to falsify mandatory logs of food temperatures because they didn’t have enough time to check temperatures as many times a day as required.

The Maine AFL-CIO noted that once workers filed with the NLRB, Chipotle began an anti-union campaign “to harass and intimidate workers into voting against forming a union...”

“We believe that [by forming a union] we will help combat Chipotle’s systemic exploitation of crew members and make it possible for us to do our jobs safely and to the best of our ability at all times,” said McNease.

But the franchise announced earlier this week it was closing the Augusta location because they were “unable to adequately staff this remote restaurant with crew.” They also blamed “excessive requests” from employees for time off and sick days. “Closing the Chipotle restaurant in Augusta, Maine, has nothing to do with union activity,” the company stated.

“This is union busting 101,” McNease said at a subsequent rally. “Instead of at least sitting at the table with us, we get an email that says there’s no store anymore, they closed it...They’re scared because they know how powerful we are and if we catch fire like the unionization effort at Starbucks they won’t be able to stop us.”

Citing retaliation, Chipotle United filed an injunction with NLRB against the franchise looking for agency action to reverse the company’s decision. Meanwhile, another Chipotle location, this one in Lansing, Mich., is also seeking to unionize and a New York City Chipotle may be next, sources say.

The Maine AFL-CIO noted, “Chipotle can try to bully workers and throw their weight around, but they can’t stop a movement. Fast food workers are fed up with low wages, unsafe working conditions and lousy treatment. They are ready to stand up and organize for a better life.”

AVERAGE CEO-TO-WORKER PAY RATIO WAS 324-TO-1 IN 2021

Historic corporate profits, profiteering corporations and runaway CEO pay have created the perfect storm for “greedflation,” according to the AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO Executive Paywatch website, shows that CEOs of S&P 500 Index companies received, on average, \$18.3 million in total compensation in 2021. The average S&P 500 Index company CEO-to-worker pay ratio is now 324-to-1, up from 299-to-1 in 2020 and just 264-to-1 in 2019. AFL-CIO said that runaway CEO pay is a symptom of “greedflation,” when companies increase prices to boost corporate profits and create windfall payouts for corporate CEOs. In 2021, corporate profits broke records and CEOs made a fortune during the pandemic. Average S&P 500 Index company CEO pay rose 18.2% in 2021, faster than the U.S. inflation rate of 7.1%.

Wall Street elites have been quick to blame workers' wages and low unemployment for causing inflation. But in reality, U.S. workers' earnings actually fell behind inflation, rising just 4.7% in 2021. In real terms, average hourly earnings fell 2.4% last year after adjusting for inflation. "During the pandemic, the ratio between CEO and worker pay jumped 23%," said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond. "Instead of investing in their workforces by raising wages and keeping the prices of their goods and services in check, their solution is to reap record profits from rising prices and cause a recession that will put working people out of our jobs," he added. The juxtaposition between growing inequality and increased union organizing is no coincidence. Petitions filed at the National Labor Relations Board by working people to exercise their freedom to come together in unions and negotiate for a fair return on their work jumped significantly in the first half of this year.

UNION ELECTION PETITIONS UP 58%, SAYS NLRB

During the first nine months of Fiscal Year 2022 (October 1–June 30), union representation petitions filed at the NLRB have increased 58% — up to 1,892 from 1,197 during the first three quarters of FY2021. By May 25, FY2022 petitions exceeded the total number of petitions filed in all of FY2021. At the same time, unfair labor practice charges have increased 16%—from 11,082 to 12,819. The increase in cases comes during a period of critical funding and staffing shortages for the Agency. The NLRB has received the same Congressional appropriation of \$274.2 million for nine consecutive years as costs have risen. Adjusting for inflation, the Agency's budget has decreased 25% since FY2010. Overall Agency staffing levels have dropped 39% since FY2002 and field staffing has shrunk by 50%. The President's Budget for FY2023 requested \$319.4 million for the NLRB, a 16% budget increase.

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

Monday, August 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.

Tuesday, August 9 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

Wednesday, August 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org

Thursday, August 11 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, August 12 – 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. 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.