

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"

Number 30 – July 23, 2026



In this issue – NCL MOU Further Improved//House NDAA has Maritime Provisions//Texas A&M Maritime Ready for New Ship//Sound Off on the Failed Jones Act Waiver//NMC Improves Processing//MarAd, Long Beach Partner on Nuclear Power Shipping//West Coast Harry Bridges Holiday//

NEGOTIATORS SECURE STRONG ECONOMIC REOPENER WITH NCL

The Union has reached terms with Norwegian Cruise Line-America, Inc. on a reopener covering wage, benefits and conditions of employment for the officer positions aboard the PRIDE OF AMERICA over the next four years. The cruise ship is the lone large U.S.-flag passenger vessel and also the only cruise ship operating exclusively between the Hawaiian Islands. Our contract with NCL runs through June 30, 2034. Among many other beneficial provisions secured by negotiators, M.E.B.A. officers will enjoy solid wage and overtime increases, travel improvements and reimbursements, and an additional holiday – Jesse Calhoun Day (April 4). In addition, a new shipyard supplement will benefit our bargaining unit members who will also enjoy an increase in vacation days with contract improvements for Medical Training AMC and JEC.

Also, a new billet has been added to the MOU – the Hotel First Engineer, which will be paid equal to the First Engineer position. Importantly, NCL has been signed onto the M.E.B.A. Vacation Plan. The company had been paying officers' vacations internally since the M.E.B.A. won the initial contract in 2004. Now M.E.B.A. officers will be able to take or bank their vacation on their own schedule in the same fashion as the rest of M.E.B.A.'s commercial contracts. The improvements are retroactive to July 1, 2026 and covers the four-year period until the next reopener in 2030.

Executive V.P. Maxim Alper headed up the M.E.B.A. negotiating team along with Oakland Patrolman Chris Coombs, with assistance from HQ Contracts Rep. Mark Gallagher. Rank and file members Patrick Calder, Garrett Adams, Michael Roller and Ryan Wall assisted the M.E.B.A. team and many members sailing for NCL should also be thanked for their input. The new MOU has been sent to each of the Union halls and will be discussed at the August membership meetings. NCL remains one of the industry's most sought-after assignments, combining a valuable shipboard experience, strong contractual protections, and the opportunity to be part of a world-class cruise operation in the beautiful Hawaiian Islands.

HOUSE DEFENSE BILL CONTAINS SHIPS FOR AMERICA PROVISIONS

In a 216-212 vote, the House of Representatives has approved its version of the Fiscal Year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), that contains important maritime boosting provisions. Contained within the defense authorization package are several important maritime initiatives aligned with the SHIPS for America Act and the Maritime Action Plan (MAP). The House NDAA includes several measures designed to strengthen the nation's maritime capabilities, including a new Maritime

Security Trust Fund aimed at rebuilding U.S. commercial shipbuilding, increasing the size and capacity of the U.S.-flag fleet, and supporting investments in the maritime workforce. It also overhauls cargo preference requirements, raising the government cargo preference mandate from 50 percent to 100 percent, a key objective of the M.E.B.A., while also creating a Ship America Office at the Maritime Administration to help promote and support the domestic maritime industry. It would also expand assistance for maritime education and training, including funding to cover fuel expenses for cadet training ships and increased financial aid opportunities for students enrolled at State Maritime Academies.

The House measure now moves into negotiations with the Senate as lawmakers work to reconcile differences between the two versions of the NDAA before final passage. While the legislation still has steps to clear before becoming law, the inclusion of these maritime provisions demonstrates continued bipartisan recognition that rebuilding the U.S. maritime sector is essential to national security, economic strength, and workforce readiness. The progress also highlights the impact of M.E.B.A.'s ongoing advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill to promote a stronger American maritime industry.

NEW TEXAS A&M TRAINING SHIP CHRISTENED

The fourth of five National Security Multi-Mission Vessels (NSMVs) built for the nation's state maritime academies was officially christened on July 17 during a ceremony at Hanwha Philly Shipyard in Philadelphia. The future training ship TS LONE STAR STATE will serve the Texas A&M Maritime Academy in Galveston, providing cadets with a state-of-the-art platform for at-sea education while supporting national emergency response missions when needed. The ceremony drew federal, state and maritime leaders, including U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA.), who highlighted the importance of rebuilding America's shipbuilding capacity and strengthening the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Designed to replace aging training vessels, the NSMVs feature modern bridge and engine-room training facilities while also being capable of supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. Following outfitting and sea trials, LONE STAR STATE will become the academy's first purpose-built training ship in more than two decades, preparing future mariners to serve both the commercial maritime industry and the nation's sealift needs for years to come.

SUNY Maritime College welcomed the EMPIRE STATE VII, the first of the NSMVs, in 2023. Massachusetts Maritime received the PATRIOT STATE II in late 2024, and Maine Maritime has been enjoying the new STATE OF MAINE since earlier this year when it took delivery. The GOLDEN STATE, the final planned NSMV slated for Cal Poly Maritime Academy, is in the final stages of construction at Hanwha and is expected to enter service sometime next year. NSMV vessel specifications: Length: 159.85 meters (525 feet); Beam: 27 meters (88 feet); Draft, scantling: 7 meters (21 feet); Total berthing: 760 persons; Speed: 18 kts; Deadweight: 8,487 tons. Installed power: 16,800 kW (22,500 hp), plus 900 kW (1,200 hp) emergency generator; Propulsion: 4 x Wabtec 16V250MDC engines, [1] single all-electric drive shaft.

SOUND OFF ON THE FAILED JONES ACT WAIVER

Reports suggest the Trump Administration is again weighing an extension of the Jones Act waiver, which will have been egregiously sidelined for a record 150 days by the August 16 expiration date of the second successive Jones Act waiver. Lawmakers on Capitol Hill have voiced strong opposition to the ongoing waiver which is damaging U.S.-flag shipping and American mariners. Speaker Mike

Johnson, Majority Leader Steve Scalise, and more than 50 House Republicans have called on President Trump to let the waiver expire, warning that it undermines American maritime jobs, weakens domestic shipping, and hurts U.S. workers, families, and communities. The Jones Act waiver is handing foreign shipping companies exactly what they want: American cargo, bigger profits, and a further competitive advantage built on the backs of U.S. mariners and the domestic maritime industry.

Thousands of advocates have already made their voices heard by contacting Congress, but the fight is not over. Now is the time to remind your elected officials that their constituents expect them to stand up for American mariners and support ending this misguided waiver. Click the button below to send your message today. Before submitting it, be sure to select Enable OneClick Echo.” This feature automatically sends a follow-up message to your Senators and Representative 72 hours later, reinforcing your position with no additional effort on your part. Help protect American maritime jobs and ensure this harmful Jones Act waiver comes to an end. Click here to send a quick message: [Use your VOICE. Tell Congress to Act. End the Waiver.](#)

NMC NARROWS BACKLOG, INCREASES PROCESSING TIMES

The National Maritime Center (NMC) has shortened its credential processing timeline as it continues to recover from the application backlog created by the 2026 federal funding lapse. The improvement follows months of expanded production efforts and builds on the processing timeline update the agency issued in June. Effective immediately, the NMC expects to process complete applications within four months of receipt, not including any time applicants spend completing examinations or responding to requests for additional information. According to the agency, the faster turnaround is the result of overtime, surge processing, workflow improvements, increased production capacity, and the strategic reassignment of personnel and resources to reduce the backlog that accumulated during the appropriations lapse. Although application volumes remain higher than normal, the NMC said it expects processing times to continue improving. Mariners and maritime employers are still encouraged to submit credential applications as early as possible to help avoid delays that could affect employment opportunities or vessel operations.

NMC noted that applications will continue to be processed on a first-in, first-out basis. Only applications demonstrating a clear and documented nexus to national defense will be considered for expedited processing. Mariners are strongly encouraged to apply early via the ASAP Tool to account for unforeseen delays. As a reminder, mariner credential renewals may also be post-dated up to 8 months, allowing mariners to renew early. Paper and incomplete submissions may delay issuance. Mariners should verify the expiration dates on their medical certificates before submitting a renewal application. Medical certificate expiration dates may differ from MMC expiration dates, and medical certificate renewal may not yet be necessary.

The NMC remains committed to further improving processing times while maintaining the safety, security, and professional standards of the U.S. merchant mariner credentialing system. Mariners are encouraged to monitor the NMC website for updates regarding processing times, REC operations, and policy adjustments as operations stabilize. For questions, contact the Customer Service Center via the NMC online chat system, by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

LONG BEACH PORT, MARAD PARTNER ON NUCLEAR-POWERED MARITIME FUTURE

The Port of Long Beach has become the first U.S. seaport to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Maritime Administration (MarAd) to advance the development of small modular reactor (SMR) technology for commercial vessels, ports, and other maritime applications. The agreement establishes a framework for the Port and MarAd to collaborate with federal agencies, including the U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Energy, and Nuclear Regulatory Commission, on safety standards, operational protocols, and best practices for future SMR-powered ships.

“This milestone agreement...brings cutting-edge Small Modular Reactor technology into active testing,” said Maritime Administrator Stephen M. Carmel, noting the initiative supports efforts to strengthen U.S. shipbuilding, maritime security, and the training of the next generation of American mariners. While the nonbinding agreement does not commit either party to funding or adoption of a specific technology, it marks a significant step toward evaluating nuclear energy as a potential future power source for the U.S. maritime industry.

WEST COAST HALLS CLOSED ON TUESDAY TO HONOR HARRY BRIDGES

M.E.B.A. halls and offices on the West Coast will be closed on Tuesday, July 28 to honor labor giant Harry Bridges on the 125th anniversary of his birthday. Alfred (“Harry”) Bridges was born on July 28, 1901 in Kensington, Australia. He went to sea as a teenager, eventually settling in San Francisco in the early 1920s. By 1930 he was working on the San Francisco waterfront and soon became a leader and voice for Bay area longshoremen. In May 1934, West Coast longshoremen launched a strike over issues involving safety, working conditions and wages. Adopting the motto “an injury to one is an injury to all,” Bridges understood that the only way his union brothers and sisters could make progress was through combining efforts with maritime and related unions in the same way that companies often combined efforts to oppose unions. He also realized that when union membership became more inclusive, it would be harder for employers to recruit minorities as strikebreakers as they had in the past. The culmination of the strike would take place in Bridges’ home port.

Along the West Coast, strikers (and bystanders) were arrested, beaten and gassed. On July 5, 1934 (Bloody Thursday), two picketers were shot and killed in San Francisco. Four days later, 40,000 people filled Market Street for the two men’s funeral procession. San Franciscans, angered by the violence against their working-class neighbors, joined longshore and maritime unions in a “General Strike.” On July 16, bustling San Francisco became eerily silent as over 100,000 Bay Area workers walked out. Business and government leaders took notice. The San Francisco General Strike ended on July 19, 1934 and the West Coast waterfront strike finished on July 31, when both sides agreed to go to arbitration. The longshoremen’s victory featured a contract establishing shorter hours, better wages – and hiring halls. Hiring would be through halls maintained jointly by the union and companies, with a dispatcher selected by the union. A surge in union organizing and membership soon followed the unionization of all the West Coast ports.

Bridges helped establish the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) in 1937 and led the union for over 40 years. Between 1934 and 1955, Bridges faced a relentless series of legal and legislative assaults from the Federal Government over his alleged ties to the Communist Party. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1945 but the Government revoked that status and oversaw a perjury case against him that handed out a 5-year sentence. Over the course of two trials and multiple appeals including two U.S. Supreme Court decisions — Bridges and his legal team fought

back against an onslaught driven by Cold War paranoia. They exposed fabricated evidence and challenged accusations of subversion. In the end, Bridges emerged vindicated, with both his conviction and denaturalization overturned. He retired in 1977 and enjoyed his remaining years as an elder statesman of the labor movement. He died in San Francisco in 1990 at the age of 88.

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

Monday, August 3 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, August 4 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Portland, Maine@1200.**

Wednesday, August 5 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, August 6 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, August 7 – **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