

# 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"*

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### **M.E.B.A. FINALIZES ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM AGREEMENT**

The M.E.B.A. has ratified a new collective bargaining agreement covering our members working in the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). The three-year agreement, which takes effect on July 1, 2025, was ratified by bargaining unit members following a week-long balloting period from June 9–15. Nearly all eligible voters participated, a testament to the high level of engagement within the bargaining unit. The agreement was previously approved by the Alaska State Legislature. The new contract goes a long way to address many of the issues that have hindered the ferry fleet over the past few years which made it a less attractive place to work, including lower wages and other conditions that led to short staffing and canceled sailings. Wage increases, Personal Leave and OT improvements as well as other compensation and incentives will help enhance the working experience for our members in the bargaining unit. In addition, negotiators were able to secure a single unified contract for the represented fleet instead of disparate work rules and wage scales applied to various vessels. The Union appreciates the patience of bargaining unit members as the new system takes hold.

This hard-won agreement is the result of months of diligent and coordinated union work. Executive V.P. Max Alper's negotiating team included the member-elected bargaining committee consisting of Chris Brooks, Josh Chevalier, Chris Fenn, Pat McManus, Meagan Nye, and Robbie Provost. Their leadership and commitment at the table were instrumental in bringing this contract across the finish line. Also key, were Alaska-Seattle Representative Claudia Cimini, M.E.B.A. AMHS Rep. Nicole Linn and Oakland Patrolman Chris Coombs.

This new contract is not only a product of negotiations — it's a reflection of member-driven unionism. From participating in surveys and meetings to helping craft proposal language, AMHS members shaped every stage of the process. Their involvement fueled the bargaining strategy and strengthened our collective voice. Over the past year, M.E.B.A. has made historic strides in support of our AMHS brothers and sisters. We launched a Shop Steward program, onboarded a permanent Representative position specifically for the AMHS unit, and brought on a temporary rep. to help during negotiations. We also retained an Alaska-based attorney who will continue supporting members on AMHS-specific legal issues. The M.E.B.A.'s new Alaskan lobbyist has also proved effective at keeping Alaska's Government informed of AMHS and citizen concerns. Additionally, for the first time, AMHS had formal representation at M.E.B.A.'s Inland Conference, ensuring member concerns were heard at the national level.

As M.E.B.A. marks its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, our long-standing relationship with the Alaska Marine Highway System stands stronger than ever. From the early days of AMHS to this landmark contract, our shared history is a reminder that when we bargain together, organize together, and stand together — we win together.

### **UNION SECURES HISTORIC CONTRACT AT STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY**

After two years of hard-fought negotiations, the Union has successfully reached a landmark agreement with the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket Steamship Authority (SSA), securing a new three-year contract for licensed engineers aboard SSA vessels.

On Tuesday, the SSA Board of Governors formally ratified the agreement — just one week after it was overwhelmingly approved by M.E.B.A. members in the bargaining unit. The contract covers engineers serving aboard the SSA's fleet of 10 vessels, which provide vital transportation of passengers, vehicles, and freight between mainland Massachusetts and the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. M.E.B.A. has represented this workforce since the mid-1960s.

The new contract features a historic 38% wage increase — the largest in the Steamship Authority's history — along with critical quality-of-life improvements. Notably, the agreement was achieved without surrendering any existing contractual language. This preserves long-standing worker protections while delivering overdue compensation and recognition.

“Our members have shown incredible solidarity and patience throughout this process,” M.E.B.A. Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan noted. “This agreement is testament to the strength and diligent work of our Boston representatives, attorney, and above all our Union delegates. We believe this contract provides significant gains for our members and lays the groundwork for a more stable and prosperous future for everyone.”

Vice President Callahan led the negotiations alongside Boston Representatives Stuart Fay and Brian Flynn. Outstanding rank-and-file support was provided by Cole Nee, Ross McNally, Dan Lindberg, Joe DeMelin, and Mike Brides.

### **MARINERS ENCOURAGED TO TAKE WMU-OUIS SURVEY ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

M.E.B.A. is encouraging our mariners to participate in an anonymous survey that will be used to improve the shipping experience.

The World Maritime University (WMU) is calling all seafarers who are currently working on any commercial ship or have worked on such ships during or after 2013, to participate in a survey on work-related aspects, psychological well-being, and career intentions. WMU is conducting the survey in collaboration with the Officers' Unions of International Seamen (OUIS). The insights gathered will help the maritime community to consider improvements. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete, and all responses will remain completely anonymous. You are welcome to share the survey link with seafarers in your network. The participation deadline is June 30, 2025.

You can fill out the survey by following this link:

<https://wmuhq.questionpro.eu/seafarersworklifebalancesurvey>

## **SPIKE IN GPS/AIS DISRUPTIONS THREATEN STRAIT OF HORMUZ SHIPPING**

Commercial shipping operations in and around the Strait of Hormuz and the broader Gulf region are grappling with a sharp rise in electronic disruptions, according to the Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC), which is part of the U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces. The surge in interference, targeting GPS and AIS navigation systems, is complicating safe passage through one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints.

Two oil tankers burst into flames after colliding Tuesday near the Strait of Hormuz. Despite the dramatic incident, authorities reported no crew injuries or oil spills. Authorities are investigating, but stated that there doesn't seem to be any indication right now that outside interference contributed to the accident.

Since Friday, missile exchanges between Iran and Israel have intensified, leading to significant disruption of navigation systems around the narrow passage between Iran and Oman — a maritime corridor that carries roughly 20% of global oil shipments. On Monday, Iranian missile strikes hit major Israeli cities, while Israel's prime minister declared the country's intention to dismantle Iran's nuclear and missile infrastructure. Civilian casualties continue to climb as the conflict continues. Iran has previously threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz in response to international sanctions or military pressure. Any such disruption could choke off vital shipping lanes and trigger volatility in global energy markets.

JMIC's advisory stated, "The maritime threat level remains elevated due to uncertainty within the current environment. The Strait of Hormuz remains open and commercial traffic continues to flow; however, JMIC has received reports of electronic interference stemming from the port of Bandar Abbas. There remains a media narrative on a potential blockade of the SoH. JMIC has no confirmed information pointing towards a blockade or closure, but will follow the situation closely."

## **M.E.B.A. FAMILY BENEFITS FROM UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIP**

Union Plus recently distributed \$250,000 in scholarships to 193 deserving students across 33 states, representing 38 different unions — including one standout recipient from the M.E.B.A. Among this year's scholarship winners is Declan Steele of Amherst, New Hampshire, son of longtime M.E.B.A. member Christopher Steele.

Declan is currently pursuing a degree in aviation technology at Nashua Community College in New Hampshire and is on track to graduate in May 2026. With ambitions to become a multifaceted aviation professional — skilled in both piloting and maintaining aircraft — Declan is steadily working toward his private pilot's license. He also dreams of one day joining the ranks of unionized commercial pilots.

Outside the classroom, Declan is no stranger to hard work. He spent last summer working as a form carpenter for a local concrete company and kept up the grind during the school year as a barista — all in an effort to help cover college costs.

His father Christopher has sailed under the M.E.B.A. banner since 2002, and Declan credits his father's union with shaping both his values and aspirations. He recalls joining his father at various M.E.B.A. events and visiting the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School in Easton, Maryland while his dad was training. Those early experiences left a lasting impression.

“I have always felt the strong presence of solidarity, fairness, and opportunity,” Declan said. “M.E.B.A. supports workers with fair wages, medical coverage, and job security, which have allowed our family to thrive. I hope to carry forward the legacy of solidarity that has defined my family and inspired my dreams.”

### **YI NAMED ACTING MARAD HEAD**

Sang H. Yi has been named as the Acting Maritime Administrator to fill in the gap while the nominee for the permanent position, Steven Carmel, awaits Senate confirmation. M.E.B.A. has had an excellent working relationship with Yi, who served as the agency’s Deputy Maritime Administrator before this temporary assignment.

“It’s an honor to serve my country and be a driving force behind a renewed era of U.S. maritime strength on the global stage,” said Yi. “The Merchant Marine plays a vital role in supporting our national security and economic growth, and our industry partnerships will help us secure a resilient and strong maritime future.”

Before joining MarAd, Acting Administrator Yi spent nearly 15 years leading congressional oversight and investigations for three committees in the U.S. House of Representatives. Prior to his congressional career, he served in the intelligence community. He is a graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, where he received his commission as an officer in the Navy Reserve and a Third Mate Unlimited license.

### **LAST WEEK TO SIGN UP FOR THE JUNE 27 CAA-M.E.B.A. PICNIC/150th CELEBRATION**

The entire M.E.B.A. membership, active and retired, and especially Calhoon graduates, are invited to the Calhoon Alumni Association (CAA) Reunion scheduled for June 27-29 at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. The weekend will also include a celebration of the M.E.B.A.’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Union is in its 150<sup>th</sup> year as of February 23 and there will be much rejoicing. Information, event fees, and registration forms are on the CMES website located at [www.mebaschool.org](http://www.mebaschool.org). Look for the CAA page link.

The weekend kicks off with the traditional Golf Tournament on Friday, June 27 at 1000. There will be an evening muster at the Calhoon Saloon later that evening. The party on the Manor House Lawn will take place all day Saturday, June 28. This is a great family event that you should be sure to sign up for. Direct any questions to [caa@mebaschool.org](mailto:caa@mebaschool.org) and check out the School website to get the complete lowdown. Take this opportunity to spread the word throughout the M.E.B.A. world as well as to past Calhoon School cadets, instructors, shipmates, friends, and families.

### **GOVT. FLEET MARINERS URGED TO AVOID LOSING UNION PROTECTION**

MSC and Army Corps mariners will LOSE all future union protections and benefits if their dues lapse. The Union will continue to provide critical safeguards and exclusive pathways to essential benefits that our Government Fleet mariners expect. Continued membership is a lifeline to maintain the collective strength needed to preserve fair treatment and help protect your sailing career during uncertain times.

MSC and Army Corps members are urged to check in with our Norfolk Union hall to verify contact information and speak with our Government Fleet Representatives who are keeping the fleet apprised of the latest developments. Affected members should check in with M.E.B.A. Government Fleet Representative Craig Moran at the Norfolk Union hall at (757) 440-1820 or [govtfleet@mebaunion.org](mailto:govtfleet@mebaunion.org). Assistant Representative Ola Lassley can be reached at the same number or via email at [Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org](mailto:Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org). M.E.B.A. Government Fleet Reps. continue to contact mariners as well, and will be visiting ships to help them understand their options.

Members in those fleets should maintain their good standing by using M.E.B.A.'s online payment portal at <https://meba.workingsystems.com>. The Membership Department at Headquarters can provide assistance with any technical issues by phone at (202) 638-5355 or via email at [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org). Those enrolling in the M.E.B.A. Payment Portal must have an email address on file with Headquarters that correlates to their payment portal i.d., so make sure the HQ records match. Payments can also be made in person at any M.E.B.A. Union hall or office. To ensure continuity, members are advised to complete payments through the fourth quarter.

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

Monday, July 7 – **Boston@1200**. *Bloody Thursday observed – West Coast Halls Closed*

Tuesday, July 8 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300**.

Wednesday, July 9 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

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

Friday, July 11 – **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](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). Website: [www.mebaunion.org](http://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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or [www.mebaschool.org](http://www.mebaschool.org). M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or [www.mebaplans.org](http://www.mebaplans.org)*