

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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REOPENER AGREEMENT COMPLETED WITH APL FOR PORT ENGINEERS

The Union concluded reopener talks with American President Lines and has finalized a Memorandum of Understanding covering port engineers. A reopener agreement covering APL Deep-Sea engineers had been completed in late December. The Port Engineer MOU secures wage, pension and MPB improvements as well as Plan contribution increases. The overall agreement runs through the end of September 2024.

M.E.B.A. Executive V.P. Claudia Cimini headed up negotiations along with L.A. Branch Agent Rich Doherty and Oakland Patrolman Max Alper. Rank and file members participating in talks included Seth Massey, Brannon Massey, Chris Coombs, Anthony Aiello, Staffan Johnson and Nate Wirt. The MOU and Salient Points were sent to each of the Union halls.

M.E.B.A. AT LABOR POW-WOW WITH PRESIDENT

The M.E.B.A. took part in a closed meeting of two dozen labor leaders on Saturday in Wilmington, DE that drew a visit from President Joe Biden and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh. Unions have enjoyed strong support from the Administration, and leaders discussed strategies to defend and expand worker rights while helping to advance the President's labor agenda.

On the heels of a strong jobs report and the delivery of his first State of the Union address to the nation, the President, along with Secretary Walsh, dove into issues of interest at the meeting with labor leaders and discussed implementing report recommendations made by the White House Task Force to expand union organizing and collective bargaining for public and private sector employees.

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha represented the Union at the meeting and was joined by union leaders that included AFL-CIO's Liz Shuler, ILWU's Willie Adams, TTD's Greg Regan, and top officials from MM&P, SIU, RWDSU, UAW, AFGE and the Teamsters, among others.

Secretary-Treasurer Rexha discussed U.S.-flag shipping and the Jones Act with the President, who is an ally of the industry. He also expressed his appreciation to Biden for his strong declaration of support for cops during his State of the Union address in which the President made it clear that police need to have their budgets enhanced, not restructured or cut. Rex thanked the President on behalf of our law enforcement affiliates, the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs (ALADS) and the L.A. County Professional Peace Officers Association (PPOA).

M.E.B.A. REAFFILIATES WITH THE MARITIME TRADES DEPT., AFL-CIO

The M.E.B.A. has reaffiliated with the Maritime Trades Department (MTD), a constitutionally mandated division of the AFL-CIO comprised of 23 international unions and 20 port maritime councils in the U.S. and Canada. The MTD battles on behalf of U.S.-flag shipping in the halls of Congress, with the Administration and to the general public.

The Union had departed MTD in 2013 to concentrate on other affiliations, but has been rebroadening our alliances as we pursue the interests of our members and industry. M.E.B.A. has a long and productive relationship with MTD dating back to our first affiliation with them in 1957.

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac will serve as the Union's representative on the MTD Executive Board and the Union will take part in the MTD's National Convention in June and the upcoming celebration of the MTD's 76th Anniversary.

TSP, MSP FULLY FUNDED IN OMNIBUS

The Tanker Security Program (TSP) is on the verge of realization after lawmakers finally advanced an Omnibus Appropriations bill that funds the Government through the end of the Fiscal Year. Wednesday night's House passage of the \$1.5 trillion package is expected to pass the Senate in the next few days, and will break the cycle of short-term stop-gap measures that kept the Government running but prevented spending on newly authorized programs.

The TSP and \$60 million in funding was originally authorized by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. Though Congress checked off on the formation of the program, its launch is reliant on the passage of an appropriations measure that secures the allocation of funds. The TSP is a planned fleet of 10 commercial U.S.-flag petroleum product tankers supporting our nation's long-term strategic defense needs. The program would reduce military reliance on foreign-flag commercial vessels while also expanding the qualified mariner pool. MarAd must report to Congress on the progress of the program 90 days after implementation.

Lawmaker interest in providing emergency aid to Ukraine helped drive the Omnibus movement and the legislation, passed by the House on Wednesday night, will provide \$13.6 billion to help Ukrainians resist the Russian attack on their country.

The Maritime Security Program (MSP) will also receive full funding for Fiscal Year '22 (\$318 million - \$5.3 million per ship). In addition, the bill will provide \$10,000,000 to fund the two vessel U.S.-flag cable security fleet that provides "installation, maintenance, and repair of submarine cables and related equipment."

M.E.B.A. SEARCH FOR HOUSTON REP.

M.E.B.A.'s District Executive Committee has decided to hire a Houston Union hall Representative for a trial period running through the end of the year. At that point, a determination will be made as to whether the position would be made permanent.

The duties and responsibilities of the Houston Union Rep will be, but are not limited to:

- Ship visits
- Assistance around the Union hall
- Assisting members

- Grievances
- Recruitment
- Finding new work opportunities

The position comes with standard Representative pay and benefits. Those with questions or with interest in applying for this position should contact Gulf Coast Vice President Adam Smith at asmith@mebaunion.org

INCENTIVE PAYMENT PROGRAM EXPANDED FOR OLDER MARITIME CADETS UNDER SENATE-PASSED BILL

Bipartisan legislation to expand the Student Incentive Payment Program for Maritime Academy cadets has passed the U.S. Senate. A bill spearheaded by Sen. Gary Peters' (D-MI) would expand age eligibility requirements for the Student Incentive Payment Program to allow financial assistance to older cadets who attend one of six State Maritime Academies and commit to a post-graduation service obligation.

The Changing Age-Determined Eligibility to Student Incentive Payments (CADETS) Act would provide up to \$32,000 in incentive payment funding over four years to help offset the cost of tuition, uniforms, books, and living costs. Current Student Incentive Payment Program age requirements prohibit cadets older than 25 from participating in the program. State Maritime Academies have programs to recruit former military veterans and service members, but most of these cadets are too old to qualify for this funding. As a result, older students—many of whom are veterans—therefore do not qualify for this program due to their age.

“The Lake Carriers’ Association and its member companies strongly support Senator Peters’ bill encouraging more Michiganders and Americans to join the U.S. maritime industry,” said Jim Weakley, President of the Lake Carriers’ Association. “Those men and women who delayed college to serve their country should not be denied opportunities given to younger, more recent high school graduates. This common sense legislation is long overdue ...”

UNIONS CALL FOR TRANSIT WORKER PROTECTIONS FROM ASSAULT

Labor organizations representing transit drivers and other transportation workers urged Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Administrator Nuria Fernandez to immediately implement safety provisions in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to protect transit workers from assault. Four months after the passage of the bill, the FTA has yet to implement these safety provisions. Meanwhile, transit workers continue to face danger on the job. Assaults against transit workers have long been a concern but dramatically increased during the last three years of the pandemic, as did assaults on other frontline transportation workers like airline and airport workers.

The letter was signed by the Transportation Trades Dept. (AFL-CIO) and M.E.B.A. affiliate Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS) among others. The unions wrote, “Our members include bus and rail transit operators, station agents, car cleaners, mechanics, and other frontline workers, all of whom are at risk of assault and worse each day they arrive at work...Before, and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, these workers have laid their lives on the line every day to ensure Americans have access to safe, reliable transportation, and we must not turn our backs on them another day.”

USMMA SUPERINTENDENT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Vice Adm. Jack Buono will retire as Superintendent of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy following the school year graduation after 3 ½ challenging years. He will take part in a change of command ceremony in June once his permanent successor is named. Vice Adm. Buono is a 1978 Kings Point graduate following years as President of SeaRiver Maritime in Houston, TX. Sources described this as a planned retirement, as Buono had allegedly intended to serve only three years in the post. As Superintendent, Vice Adm. Buono guided the Academy through the COVID-19 global health pandemic, worked on modernizing the Academy and dealt with the fall-out, and the implementation of protections, regarding cadet safety issues at sea and on campus. “For Ginger and I, serving as the Superintendent and First Lady of the Academy has been the honor of a lifetime,” said VAdm. Buono. “The young women and men who come here are truly the best and brightest America has to offer. I am amazed at their resilience and perseverance, and know the future of the maritime industry is in good hands with them at the wheel.”

TEDDY GLEASON DAY NEXT THURSDAY

M.E.B.A. East Coast Union halls and offices (not including Headquarters) will be closed on Wednesday, March 17th in observance of Teddy Gleason Day. Thomas “Teddy” Gleason joined the International Longshoremen's Association in 1919 and served as ILA President from 1963 to 1987. He died on Christmas Eve in 1992 at the age of 92. Gleason Day was originally celebrated by the ILA for years on November 8, but because the day was too close to Veterans Day and Election Day, his commemoration day was switched. St. Patrick’s Day was then selected as the day to honor the life and legacy of Teddy Gleason, one of our greatest trade unionists.

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

Friday, March 11 – Honolulu@1100.

Monday, April 4 – All Halls Closed (*Jesse Calboon Day*)

Tuesday, April 5 – Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle-Fife@1300.

Wednesday, April 6 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register at mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, April 7 – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, April 8 – 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.