

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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MEMBERS RATIFY APL DEEP-SEA, PORT ENGINEER AGREEMENTS

Members at the regular October meetings ratified a pair of five-year agreements covering deep-sea engineers as well as port engineers working for American President Lines. Both votes passed handily as members embraced the contracts that usher in wage increases and benefit plan contribution boosts among other items.

Executive V.P. Claudia Cimini headed up negotiations with the company along with our current Oakland Patrolman with input from Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith. Rank-and-file members involved in talks included Tommy Stillwachs, Kevin Parsons, Tony Aiello and the incoming Oakland Patrolman.

EXTENDED WAR ZONE BONUS AREAS FOR MLL, LIBERTY OFFICERS

The Union reached an agreement with both Liberty Maritime and Maersk Line, Ltd. to extend the war zone areas for M.E.B.A. officers on vessels transiting through high-risk waters.

The Supplemental Letters of Agreement build upon previous LOAs with the companies in early 2024 that designated certain global shipping lanes as high-risk areas including the Southern Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Israeli territorial waters and parts of the Gulf of Aden. The supplemental LOAs extend the zones to include additional areas of the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden as well as Omani Territorial waters. The zones where attacks on the MAERSK SENTOSA, MAERSK CHESAPEAKE and MAERSK DETROIT occurred will no longer be excluded.

LOA terms include bonuses for our mariners transiting those areas (with retroactivity) equal to their base wages and generally payable for the duration of the transit. In addition, the agreement includes Harbor Attack and Vessel Attack bonuses as well as Company-paid death and disability insurance.

M.E.B.A.'s Atlantic Coast Vice President secured the Supplemental LOA terms with MLL and Liberty.

M.E.B.A. TAKES PART IN INTERNATIONAL COALITION MEETINGS

M.E.B.A. took part in maritime meetings with an international flavor as the industry converged in Marrakech, Morocco for a series of high-level talks this week.

The Union was represented by M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac, Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha, Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith and Government Affairs Director Erick Siahaan at the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Congress which also included meetings with the Nautilus Federation, and other unions and organizations.

M.E.B.A. took the opportunity to broadcast our issues of importance and further solidify working relationships with our international partners. ITF Delegates, including the M.E.B.A., advocated for the creation of a 'strategic fleet' for Australia in the wake of that country's decision to torpedo cabotage laws leading to the ruin of their domestic shipping. They discussed the recklessness of ship operators who continue to send mariners through the Red Sea gauntlet to save money that puts their crews at the mercy of the Houthis. Among many other topics, they cautioned global maritime unions to help save mariner lives by encouraging memberships to speak up – and document – substandard shipping conditions that could lead to mariner criminalization – such as the situation that arose from the DALI disaster when that ship lost power and destroyed a bridge in Baltimore, MD.

ITF affiliated unions committed to upholding the Federation's core mission to improve global seafarer conditions. Mariners have faced continuous challenges in the last few years, including the COVID-19 pandemic and crew change crisis, increasing levels of seafarer abandonment, wars and conflicts affecting mariners, and the worsening of the global scourge of seafarer criminalization and unfair treatment in which mariners are detained and denied access to the rules of justice. ITF unions also confirmed their commitment to bringing in young seafarers, and more female mariners, to ensure the viability of the profession for the next generation.

M.E.B.A. also took part in ITF Offshore Wind Task Force meetings. Ole Philipsen of the Danish union Dansk Metal is chair of the overall Task Force, while M.E.B.A.'s Roland Rexha serves as the chair of the ITF's North American Offshore Wind Task Force. Among other topics, they discussed the creation of an international minimum wage for all offshore wind related work.

PRODUCTIVE WORK ON REVITALIZING U.S. SEA POWER AT DC MARITIME WORKSHOP

Attendees at the 3rd National Maritime Strategy Workshop held in Washington D.C. this week deliberated over challenges faced by the U.S. commercial shipping industry and proposed solutions to face the industry's future with a winning hand. The workshop brought together key industry stakeholders, Congressional staffers as well as Defense and Transportation Department leaders including officials from the Maritime Administration and Federal Maritime Commission. Attendees discussed opportunities and maritime strategies that will help reverse the decline of American sea power, among many other topics.

Sponsored by the American Bureau of Shipping, participants also included principals of the American Maritime Congress – President Fair Kim and Government Affairs Manager Caitlyn Tierney. They took part in the three-day workshop that touched on numerous important topics

including workforce recruiting/retention, port security and infrastructure, and making mariner licensing more efficient. The presence of top staffers for Senators Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and Congressman Michael Waltz (R-FL), two of the champions trumpeting the need for an action plan to ratchet up America's maritime strength, stimulated a very productive session that precludes the forthcoming introduction of a related bill – legislation that has won the support of U.S. shipping interests including the M.E.B.A.

U.S. PORTS HAVE OUTSIZED INFLUENCE ON U.S. ECONOMY, STUDY CONFIRMS

The maritime industry, its consumer spending, suppliers, and port users support 21.8 million American jobs, a newly released study reports. The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) is touting the 2024 Port and Maritime Industry Economic Impact Report that says the port and maritime industry supports more than one out of eight jobs in the total U.S. workforce and generates almost \$2.9 trillion in economic activity.

The report found that the total employment supported by port and maritime activity dwarfs the workforce of 90% of U.S. metropolitan areas and noted that average wages of port and maritime employees is almost \$100,000, 20% more than the average U.S. worker.

“One out of every eight jobs and almost \$2.9 trillion in GDP means that we simply cannot begin to imagine our world without American ports,” exclaimed Cary Davis, AAPA President/CEO. “In spite of a perfect storm of challenges, including a pandemic, major macro-economic and geostrategic pressures, and increasingly protectionist political headwinds at home, the port industry remains an indispensable part of our nation’s supply chain as well as a dynamic catalyst for healthy growth and prosperity. That is exactly why federal government policymakers should continue making smart investments in our port system that will pay dividends.”

The full report is available [here](#).

“BIG U” HEADED FOR DAVY JONES LOCKER

The “Big U” is headed toward its final resting place as the world’s largest artificial reef. Last week, the SS UNITED STATES Conservancy transferred ownership of the historic cruise ship to Okaloosa County, Florida.

The iconic vessel was retired in 1969. Since 2009, the Conservancy had sought to repurpose the ship as a museum, but finally ran out of time while it searched for suitors. With the Big U facing eviction from its Philadelphia port, the Conservancy finally decided to accept a plan to transform the ship into an artificial reef calling it the “most dignified” choice over scrapping.

M.E.B.A. officers filled both engine rooms of the great ship during the Big U’s heyday in the 1950s and ‘60s. The SS UNITED STATES is considered one of the greatest ocean liners ever built and still holds the “Blue Riband” westbound trans-Atlantic speed record.

Conservancy president Susan Gibbs said the reef project will give the vessel a new chapter as a global destination. The transformation will take over a year, including environmental remediation before its final deployment off Florida’s Destin-Fort Walton Beach. A land-based museum will also be built to honor the ship’s history, ensuring its legacy continues to inspire future generations. Once

submerged, the nearly 1,000-foot-long vessel will become a thriving marine habitat and a world-class diving attraction.

In other Big U news, just before the vessel was towed from the dock, the ship was burglarized by several suspects in a sloppy operation. Around 1:40 a.m. on October 2nd, surveillance footage captured at least three young men climbing through an opening in the 990-foot ship's hull at Pier 82. Police said the suspects left three hours later with stolen items, including batteries and tools, and caused damage to the ship.

The footage clearly shows the suspects' faces and a 17-year-old boy later turned himself in and is being charged with burglary and trespassing. Expect the rest of the gang to be rounded up soon.

TEMPORARY SERVICE REQUIREMENT CHANGES FOR STCW DECK RATING ENDORSEMENTS

The Coast Guard Office of Merchant Mariner Credentialing has published a new policy letter addressing the impact of a recently enacted temporary reduction in sea service requirements for an Able Seaman (AB) on the service requirements for STCW deck ratings.

The change in sea service requirements for national AB endorsements impacts the qualification process for STCW deck rating endorsements. The reduction in the service requirements to obtain national endorsements results in a longer period of additional service to qualify for the STCW endorsements as Able Seafarer-Deck (AS-D). It does not change the service for the STCW endorsements. The policy letter allows for service toward Ratings Forming Part of the Navigational Watch (RFPNW) and AS-D to accrue concurrently.

The concurrent credit toward RFPNW and AS-D will be applied to all applications that have not reached final agency action. The NMC will apply these new criteria without requiring a new or amended application. A new application will be required if the MMC has already been issued or if the application has reached final agency action.

The policy letter is available on the [Merchant Mariner Credentialing Policy Letter webpage](#).

REP. GARAMENDI REMARKS ON FUTURE OF MARITIME

In remarks presented before military leaders and industry experts at San Francisco's Fleet Week Senior Leaders Seminar, Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) stressed the importance of preparing the next generation of maritime workers, underscoring the need for strategic federal investments that will create high-paying jobs, strengthen local communities, and bolster national defense.

“Reinvigorating the American maritime sector is not just a military imperative but an economic one. We must prioritize strategic investments that will drive innovation and keep our industry competitive on the global stage. The future of American shipbuilding and repair lies not only in technology but in the people who bring that technology to life,” he said.

Rep. Garamendi also outlined his “Congressional Guidance for a National Maritime Strategy,” co-led with Senators Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Representative Waltz (R-FL-06) and discussed ongoing legislative efforts to bolster America's maritime industries.

SUCCESSFUL CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM

The M.E.B.A. Union hall in Oakland served as the venue for an Oakland City Council Candidate Forum on Tuesday. The event was sponsored by Oakland Maritime, Access, Sustainability, and Trade (O-MAST) in partnership with the M.E.B.A. and the ILWU. O-MAST is a federation of maritime, transportation, logistics, labor, and community stakeholders supporting the long-term viability of the Port of Oakland. The forum presented a great opportunity for port stakeholders to engage with City Council candidates who are running for office this year in Oakland. Candidates running for every eligible district participated and provided answers to questions regarding prioritizing industrial lands, advocating for Port jobs and operations, and more.

M.E.B.A. ELECTION: HOW TO OBTAIN A DUPLICATE BALLOT

TrueBallot, Inc. is serving as the Impartial Administrator for the 2024 M.E.B.A. Election. If you are an M.E.B.A. member and did not receive a ballot – or yours has been lost or destroyed – you can request a duplicate ballot in writing.

The M.E.B.A. By-Laws state, “A member shall be entitled to make a written request of the Impartial Administrator for a duplicate ballot and receive the same provided he states in his letter that he has not received his ballot or that his ballot has been lost or mutilated so that it cannot be used. Duplicate ballots shall be counted unless the original and duplicate ballot mailed to a member are both cast, in which event neither ballot shall be counted.”

Written requests for duplicate ballots can be made to TrueBallot by emailing 0212401@trueballot.com. Please make sure you include your address to send the duplicate ballot. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact M.E.B.A. Headquarters.

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

Monday, November 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, November 5 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, November 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mehq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, November 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, November 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.***