

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War Since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

The Official Union Newsletter

Number 43 – October 26, 2017



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DISASTER RELIEF BILL PASSES DEVOID OF JONES ACT SABOTAGE

Congress approved a \$36.5 billion disaster relief bill this week to aid recovery efforts following the recent series of hurricanes as well as the California wildfires. Though a Jones Act opponent spoke out against the statute during debate on the Senate Floor, no action was taken to compromise the Act or injure U.S.-flag shipping.

Along with \$18.7 billion slotted for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's disaster relief fund, the bill also earmarks \$16 billion for flood insurance program debt, \$1.27 billion for Puerto Rico food assistance and \$576.5 million for wildfire recovery assistance. The Senate pledged more aid next month for disaster relief.

On the Senate Floor yesterday, Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) had disparaging remarks for the Jones Act calling for Puerto Rico's permanent exemption from the Act. Sen. Lee, along with Sen. John McCain, earlier introduced a bill (S. 1894) to do just that. Sen. Lee is also co-sponsoring a McCain bill to repeal the Jones Act (S.1561).

Earlier in the week, Sens. Lee and Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) threatened to hold up the relief bill if Puerto Rico did not receive a permanent exemption. But in the end, a relief package, which was earlier approved by the House, was passed by Senators without language sabotaging the Jones Act.

UPDATE ON PUERTO RICO RELIEF DELIVERIES

The American Maritime Partnership issued an update on the situation in Puerto Rico as related to relief deliveries. They noted that as of October 23, Jones Act carriers delivered "more than 19,000 loads of commercial and government relief cargo" to the island since Hurricane Maria stormed through the area. All ports are now open on the island, but functionality is limited. Although terminals are operating longer than normal hours, inland distribution – particularly final-mile delivery – is still creating backlogs on the terminals. Last week, FEMA reported that less than 8% of roads were open.

"Jones Act carriers are continuing to enhance their ability to service the island's needs. One Jones Act carrier, for example, has leased 150,000 square feet of warehouse space and purchased additional 53-foot containers. This extra capacity is necessary as commercial customers are slowly beginning to increase their shipments to the island, alongside the steady shipments of FEMA goods."

As noted in last week's issue, Sunrise Operations (Pasha) brought the M.E.B.A.-crewed HORIZON SPIRIT out of lay-up for use in the Puerto Rico trade in the wake of Hurricane Maria. The vessel continues to support relief and rebuilding efforts.

TTD: SCAPEGOATING THE JONES ACT WON'T HELP PUERTO RICO

The Transportation Trades Department (AFL-CIO) and its President Larry Willis continued to rail against misguided attacks on the Jones Act following Hurricane Maria's devastation of Puerto Rico. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents 32 unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries.

Willis penned an Op-Ed in the Congressionally-focused daily newspaper "The Hill." He noted that, "Gutting the Jones Act is a misguided proposal being fueled by misinformation. Repealing this law will not solve Puerto Rico's immediate humanitarian crisis, nor will it fix the country's long-term financial problems." He pointed out that the statute has created and helps maintain thousands of American jobs and is a crucial safeguard for national security. "Today, the Jones Act supports 500,000 jobs and is vital to national security by guaranteeing the U.S. military can rely on American vessels and skilled mariners in times of conflict and crises."

CMES: NEWLY-APPROVED ONLINE QUALIFIED ASSESSOR COURSE SCHEDULED

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that its Qualified Assessor Online course has received Coast Guard approval and the first class has been scheduled for November 3-10, 2017. Additional course offerings will be announced soon.

This course includes a live practical assessment. Proper hardware and software on the student's computer is required. Additional information pertaining to the course and system requirements, along with an application form, may be found on the website <http://support.cutwater.org/curriculum/qualified-assessor>. The ONLY way to apply for an online course is by using this form. Faxed and/or mailed application forms will not be accepted. All inquiries should be directed to support@cutwater.org.

These courses are being made available to both the M.E.B.A. membership as well as commercial customers. As such, everyone will be required to pay for the class(es) prior to admission. Upon successful completion of the class(es), eligible M.E.B.A. members will be reimbursed just as if they had taken a course at an approved alternate location. The same reimbursement procedures apply and the Application for Reimbursement form should be completed and submitted as usual.

Applications for online courses do not count against the yearly maximum number of classes you are eligible to physically take at CMES.

TOP AFL-CIO OFFICERS RE-ELECTED

Delegates to the AFL-CIO 28th Constitutional Convention in St. Louis re-elected Richard Trumka (UMWA) as president, Liz Shuler (IBEW) as secretary-treasurer and Tefere Gebre (UFCW) as executive vice president. In addition, delegates elected 55 vice presidents, who will serve as the Executive Council for a four-year term.

Richard Trumka begins his third term as president of the AFL-CIO since first elected in 2009. Liz Shuler begins her third term as secretary-treasurer, the second-highest position in the labor movement. Tefere Gebre begins his second term as executive vice president.

NEW MSC VESSEL CHRISTENED AT NASSCO

The Navy's new Expeditionary Sea Base, the USNS HERSHEL "WOODY" WILLIAMS was christened at San Diego's NASSCO shipyard on Saturday. The 784-foot long vessel will be turned over to the Military Sealift Command after its scheduled delivery in February 2018. It will serve as a flexible platform to support a variety of missions, including air mine countermeasures, counter-piracy operations, maritime security and humanitarian missions.

The ship's namesake, Hershel Woodrow Williams, spoke at the ceremony, and his two daughters, Travie Rossand and Tracie Ross, officially named and christened the ship with the traditional break of a champagne bottle alongside the ship. Williams, a retired U.S. Marine, received the Medal of Honor for his actions in the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II. He is the last surviving recipient of the Medal of Honor from that battle.

MSC Commander Rear Adm. Dee L. Mewbourne spoke at the ceremony. "Naval forces are critically important in building partnerships with our friends and allies, rapidly responding to crisis, deterring adversaries and sustaining our forward presence," he said. "Ships like HERSHEL "WOODY" WILLIAMS enable Military Sealift Command to boldly sail the world's oceans, providing assured logistics and specialized support to the joint warfighter."

REP. GARAMENDI MEETS WITH MARAD

Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) Ranking Member of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, met with the new head of the Maritime Administration, Rear Admiral Mark Buzby. They strategized about recapitalization of the Military Sealift Command and Ready Reserve Force fleets, the importance of education and training opportunities to ensure an adequate pool of capable and credentialed mariners, and ways to improve the Title XI maritime loan guarantee program to spur domestic manufacturing through the building of more ships on U.S. soil. The Admiral also expressed interest in the Congressman's "Energizing American Shipbuilding Act," a bill to require a percentage of exported American crude oil and LNG to travel on U.S.-built and U.S.-flag ships, to be introduced in November.

SIGN UP FOR M.E.B.A. VACATION PLAN DIRECT DEPOSIT

Designed for convenience, M.E.B.A. members can help themselves by taking advantage of the Vacation Plan Direct Deposit that will help save them time and ease Plans processing costs. Authorization forms are available from the Plans Office, Plans Outport Offices and at the Plans' website – www.mebaplans.org (Forms & Documents, Vacation Plan Forms). Complete details are available on the Plans' site as well. Contact (800) 811-6322 or vacation@mebaplans.org for more info.

FIGHT FOR THE JONES ACT!

Many of the online news items that bash the Jones Act have a comment section where you can inject a little truth into the false narratives being foisted on the public. Some valuable facts can be accessed from M.E.B.A.'s website (www.mebaunion.org) that will assist you when writing an online comment or penning a letter to your Congressional representation. The Navy League has made it easy to let your lawmakers know how you feel about this important issue. They created a ready-made modifiable pro-Jones Act letter accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/JonesActLetter>

With a few clicks, you can help counteract the lies and let your Congressional representation know that we need the Jones Act for a strong America!

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday, November 6 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, November 7 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, November 8 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, November 9 – L.A.@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, November 10 - Honolulu@1100.

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven 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. Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org