

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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NEW EXECUTIVE ORDER TO STRIP FEDERAL WORKERS OF UNION PROTECTIONS

President Trump has issued a new Executive Order aimed at taking away due process, legal rights and protections from hundreds of thousands of federal workers and undermining decades of laws and policies designed to protect career civil servants from being hired or fired for political reasons. The Executive Order Trump issued on Oct. 21 creates a new excepted service classification called Schedule F that will apply to any career federal employee whose job is in any way connected to federal policy – mid- to high-grade general schedule positions identified as ‘confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating’. This new classification puts these workers in “policy-making” positions and strips workers of important workplace protections against unfair treatment and discrimination such as unfair removal.

The Executive Order also directs the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), which has been used by the Trump administration to undermine federal employees and their unions, to examine whether Schedule F employees should be removed from bargaining units and in effect, prohibited from being represented by a union.

M.E.B.A. represents many of the federal government employees sailing for the Military Sealift Command, Army Corps of Engineers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Our affiliate, the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS) represents more than 11,000 FAA and Defense Department workers throughout the air traffic control system.

The order applies to current and new positions and gives agency heads seven months to conduct a complete review of their workforces that will be used to determine which jobs will be converted to the new schedule.

Everett Kelley, the President of the nation’s largest federal employee union, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), called the issuance of the E.O. “the most profound undermining of the civil service in our lifetimes...This Executive Order strips due process rights and protections from perhaps hundreds of thousands of federal employees and will enable political appointees and other officials to hire and fire these workers at will.”

The National Treasury Employee's Union filed a lawsuit over the E.O. earlier this week in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia seeking declaratory and injunctive relief.

The Chairman of the Federal Salary Council, Ron Sanders, a Trump appointee, tendered his resignation this week to protest the issuance of the Order. "...After seeing Executive Order 13957 issued by the president on Oct. 21 – which creates a new 'excepted service' for certain categories of career federal employees – I have concluded that as a matter of conscience, I can no longer serve him or his administration."

NAVY LEAGUE REPORT SAYS JONES ACT IS A TOOL AGAINST CHINA'S DOMINATION

As the Jones Act celebrates its 100-year anniversary, the Navy League released a report that emphasizes the need to commit to this important statute now and into the future. The report, "China's Use of Maritime for Global Power Demands a Strong Commitment to American Maritime," notes that the U.S. has become increasingly dependent on foreign nations to carry goods with 90% of global trade traveling by ship. China is now the world's #1 trading nation and almost two-thirds of container traffic sifts through Chinese-owned or -invested ports.

The report argues that America must prioritize its defense maritime industrial base with the Jones Act serving as a key element. It also calls for an expansion of cargo preference laws while increasing mariner and maritime industry-related job opportunities. The report can be viewed at www.navyleague.org/document.doc?id=3179

PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO SAP SEAFARER HAPPINESS, SAYS LATEST REPORT

Seafarers continue to face hard times in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the latest Seafarers Happiness Index report, published this week by The Mission to Seafarers. The Seafarers Happiness Index is a barometer of the key issues facing those at sea, conducted every three months. Seafarers are asked ten key questions about their experiences, via an online survey.

The survey reports on the experiences of seafarers between July and September 2020. This period saw some welcome action to address the dire situation facing the world's seafarers in the midst of COVID-19, including the ongoing crew change crisis, but still fell short of the comprehensive response needed from the international shipping community in the face of the second wave of the pandemic.

The average Seafarers Happiness Index for this three-month period rose initially from early respondents, but decreased toward the end of the recording period as optimism gave way to a second wave of infections that helped trample hopes that the situation was on a clear course to recovery. This was reflected in a decline in happiness levels, with one seafarers commenting that, "life during COVID is hell."

The findings of the report make it clear that the crew change crisis has not gone away. Seafarers continue to report their dismay and frustration as trips are extended beyond their contractual timeframes and the burden of working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, continues to take its toll. In addition to the mental strain, seafarers are also expressing concerns over the physical impact of extended assignments, which is exacerbated by reduced crew numbers. On top of this, some seafarers report feeling trapped between the restrictions placed on their access to shore leave and fears of the exposure risks if they do go ashore.

Frank Coles, Chief Executive Officer of the Wallem Group said, ““The index is a measure of the incompetent leadership of world governments to recognize and support seafarers. We need to start listening to our seafarers and urge governments to open their borders to seafarers and confirm their key worker status as a matter of urgency.” You can review the report at <https://tinyurl.com/y6gp4dx8>

CMES SCHEDULES DECEMBER LNG COURSE AFTER NOVEMBER OPENINGS FILL UP

After the recently scheduled November dates for the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School’s (CMES) new LNG course filled up, the School has added a new December date. The 5-day class being held at United States Maritime Resource Center (USMRC) in Port Canaveral, Florida covers a 3-day Basic Low Flashpoint Fuel Operations which includes firefighting, along with a 2-day Advanced course. When combined, this accounts for five days of required training to serve aboard the new Pasha/Sunrise LNG-fueled vessels.

The newly scheduled offering will take place from December 14-18, 2020.

Those who wish to attend should contact the CMES Registrar immediately. The Training Plan will be invoiced for the tuition. For the class dates, the travel/transportation expenses are authorized for reimbursement, as is a per diem for room and board based on GSA rates and the location of training. Transportation expenses are subject to the travel reimbursement rules that apply for transportation to the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School per Section 9 of the Rules and Regulations

Beginning in 2021, the trustees also approved both the Basic and Advanced versions of “LNG as Fuel Training” at USMRC’s Port Canaveral, Florida location as an Alternate Location Training course. Like other off-campus courses, these are subject to the eligibility requirements in Section 1 of the M.E.B.A. Training Plan Rules.

FOUR CHARGED IN MARINER CREDENTIALING SCHEME

Four individuals have been charged for their roles in a conspiracy to sell phony Coast Guard merchant mariner credentials in Norfolk, VA. According to allegations in the unsealed indictment, four men, all in their 40s, acted in concert to create counterfeit certificates from the Mid-Atlantic Maritime Academy (MAMA) and sell them to merchant mariners for a profit. The MAMA is a private state-of-the-art maritime training center, offering mariners over 100 U.S. Coast Guard approved deck and engineering courses needed for merchant mariners to hold various positions on merchant vessels. One defendant worked for the MAMA as the school’s Chief Administrator. According to the indictment, he used his position to create fake MAMA course certificates for mariners who had never taken the MAMA courses, in exchange for thousands of dollars in payments. The mariners would receive the fake certificates along with instructions on how to load them in the Coast Guard systems and be credited with a fraudulent Coast Guard qualification. The other men allegedly worked as brokers to find additional mariners willing to buy the fake certificates. In total, the conspiracy netted over \$200,000 in profits from the production of these counterfeit MAMA certificates and involved over 150 mariners purchasing fraudulent qualifications.

The four men are charged with conspiracy, mail fraud, wire fraud, and aggravated identity theft. If convicted, they face a mandatory minimum of two years in prison.

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS CAN MAKE MEMBERSHIP IF THEY FORWARD DOCUMENTATION

Qualified applicants trying to make membership should provide Headquarters with required documentation to ensure their inclusion on the next M.E.B.A. District Investigating Committee (DIC) report. The report, which will be voted on at the December membership meetings, compiles a list of those who have fulfilled the requirements of their application. To make membership, an applicant needs the required sailing days - or specified years of employment with a particular bargaining unit, must be current with service charges and must complete other necessary requirements that may include an initiation fee and/or letters of recommendation.

In addition, the DIC report will include a list of members or applicants that have been in dues or service charge arrears for two or more years. Once the membership reviews and votes on the report, those members and applicants in arrears will be **DROPPED** from the rolls. The December membership meetings take place from Dec. 7-11. If you are in arrears and want to retain your membership or applicant status, you must contact Headquarters to make payment on your arrearage and return to good standing. The Membership Department can also be contacted by applicants who are qualified to make membership and want to ensure their inclusion on the DIC's December Report. For further information, you can visit your local Union hall or contact the HQ Membership Department at (202) 638-5355 or membership@mebaunion.org.

MATSON HAS VINTAGE ART FROM CRUISE SHIP DAYS

High-quality reproductions of Matson's most popular vintage travel art are available for sale on the official site for Matson's archives, Matson Vintage Art. For more than 50 years, Matson Lines' fleet of world-class passenger cruise ships introduced tourists to the splendor of travel and the beauty and cultures of Hawaii and the South Pacific. Matson Vintage Art features iconic advertising, rare photographs, art, and memorabilia on gallery wrapped museum grade canvas or enhanced matte paper, ready to hang in a variety of sizes.

You can view the travel art images that evoke a bygone era of enchanting Pacific vacations, by visiting <https://matsonvintageart.com>

HAVE A UNION HALLOWEEN!

Unquestionably, Halloween will look different this year. In the middle of a pandemic, fewer trick-or-treaters will be knocking on your door allowing you to keep more candy for yourself! The sugary favorites listed below are made by companies that treat their workers fairly and give them a voice on the job - United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and the Bakery Confectionery Tobacco and Grain Millers (BCTGM). The knowledge that you are supporting union jobs and helping to build a stronger middle class should make those sugary goodies taste that much sweeter.

Sweet and Ethical - Abba-Zabba (BCTGM); Almond Roca (BCTGM); Baby Ruth (BCTGM); Big Hunk (BCTGM); Butterfinger (BCTGM); Cadbury (UFCW); Ghirardelli Chocolate (BCTGM); Hershey Original Chocolate Bar (BCTGM, UFCW); Hershey's Kisses (BCTGM); Hot Tamales (BCTGM); Ice Breakers (BCTGM); Jelly Belly Jelly Beans (BCTGM); Jolly Ranchers (BCTGM); Just Born (BCTGM); Look! (BCTGM); Mike and Ike (BCTGM); Payday (BCTGM); Peeps (BCTGM); Red Vines (BCTGM); Rolo (BCTGM); Russell Stover (BCTGM, UFCW); See's Candies (BCTGM); Sour Patch (BCTGM); Sugar Babies (BCTGM); Sugar Daddy (BCTGM); Tootsie Rolls (BCTGM); Zours (BCTGM);

M.E.B.A. ELECTION: OBTAINING A DUPLICATE BALLOT

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 states, "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."

Please use the following Impartial Administrator contact information to request a duplicate ballot. Any written requests for duplicate ballots made to the M.E.B.A. will be referred to the Impartial Administrator.

TrueBallot, Inc.

3 Bethesda Metro Center
Suite 700
Bethesda, MD 20814
Email: 0212001@trueballot.com

Please make sure you include the address where the duplicate ballot should be sent.

M.E.B.A. ELECTION: ONLY VOTES FROM MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING WILL COUNT

According to our By-Laws, members who are not in good standing by November 15, 2020 are not eligible to vote in the ongoing M.E.B.A. election. Please refer to the M.E.B.A. By-Laws Article Two, Section 2.

ONLINE NOVEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (*All times are local*)

Monday, November 2 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, November 3 – **CMES@1430 (In-Person)**; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, November 4 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, November 5 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, November 6 – 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 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. Visit us on Facebook. 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.