

# 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"*  
Number 41 – October 8, 2020



In this issue//ITF, Employers Look to Protect Captive Mariners//TTD Decries Rejection of Mask Mandate for Public Transport//AMHS Advisory Group Turns in Report//Maritime Unions Endorse Rep. Fitzpatrick//Sen. Sullivan Saluted//CDC Extends Cruise Ship No Sail Order//CG Alert on Spoofing//AFL-CIO Death on the Job Report//4MF is a Winner as Raffle Concludes//Halls, Offices Closed on Monday//

### **ITF, EMPLOYERS LOOK TO PROTECT CAPTIVE MARINERS IN CREW CHANGE CRISIS**

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) along with the Joint Negotiating Group representing maritime employers issued a statement this week reassuring mariners that they won't be retaliated against if they seek to end their captivity aboard vessels that are long overdue for a crew change. ITF says 400,000 seafarers remain stranded on ships around the globe, forced to extend their tours of duty due to border and travel restrictions imposed by many governments around the world, as well as the scarce availability of international flights brought about by the pandemic.

International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC) Chairman Capt Belal Ahmed said, "It is important that seafarers are not disadvantaged for merely standing up for themselves when they have completed their contracts and are mentally and physically not ready to continue to work safely."

ITF General Secretary Stephen Cotton urged maritime stakeholders to publicize the dire situation faced by the world's seafarers due to the pandemic. He said international leaders should understand the crucial contributions of mariners and take steps to spare them from unnecessary confinement that jeopardizes safety. "Seafarers have a real fear that if they speak or stand up that their careers could be over. Fear of blacklisting prevents them from enforcing their own worker and human rights. Given the mental and physical fatigue caused by extended time on board, it is more important than ever during this crew change crisis that seafarers are able to speak up. We will be coming down hard on anyone in the industry who think they can get away with targeting seafarers who use their rights to reject contract extensions. Our industry is better than that," said Cotton.

### **TTD: REJECTION OF MASK MANDATE TO PROTECT FRONTLINE TRANSPORT WORKERS & COMMUTERS IS "UNFATHOMABLE"**

The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) expressed its disgust this week that its petition for an emergency order calling for a public transportation mask mandate to protect both passengers and workers was rejected. TTD, represents 33 transportation-related unions including the M.E.B.A.

TTD President Larry Willis called it "unfathomable" that the Department of Transportation would reject a "science-backed, lifesaving measure" in a DOT ruling that was delivered the same day that

President Trump and many within his inner circle were diagnosed with COVID-19. “Sadly, it is working people who will suffer because of this decision,” said Willis.

Continuing, he noted, “Already, tens of thousands of frontline transportation workers — our members — have become ill or perished due to COVID-19 exposure. A federal commercial passenger transportation mask mandate would have offered an additional layer of protection not only for these workers, but the passengers they serve...We call on Congress to do what the DOT refused to and pass life-saving legislation requiring masks on all forms of commercial public transportation. The people who have risked their lives to see us through this crisis by serving on the frontlines of our transportation system deserve no less.”

### **AMHS ADVISORY GROUP WRAPS UP REPORT, SENDS RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNOR**

A nine-person advisory group tasked with seeking a viable path forward for the Alaska Marine Highway System has concluded their eight-month-long study and finalized a report that was sent to the Governor’s office. Sources say the Alaska Marine Highway Reshaping Work Group, appointed by Governor Mike Dunleavy, is calling for a slimmed-down fleet, two years of forward-funding and the creation of an executive board that will oversee the system. The report has not yet been made public but is expected to see daylight within the next two weeks.

Alaskans have decried the Governor’s efforts to sabotage the fleet by drastically cutting the system’s budget leading to diminished service for residents, many who live in remote locations. The ferry fleet serves as a crucial connector for Alaskan communities spread out over 3,100 miles.

Former Coast Guard Admiral Tom Barrett chaired the advisory group and noted that the report’s findings were shaped independently from any views or influence from the Governor’s office. “...It’s our report,” he said. “People can like it or dislike it. Adopt recommendations or not, some of the changes we’re recommending are hard, and will require a fair amount of work to actually make happen.”

You can visit [www.friendsofamhs.org](http://www.friendsofamhs.org) to keep up with efforts to encourage the State to provide adequate support to the Alaska ferry fleet.

### **MARITIME UNIONS ENDORSE REP. FITZPATRICK IN PENNSYLVANIA RACE**

The M.E.B.A., along with the MM&P, AMO and SIU announced their endorsement of maritime-friendly Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) in his re-election bid against his opponent on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Rep. Fitzpatrick spent years with the FBI as an agent and served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and has represented Pennsylvania's 1st congressional district since 2017. During his first term, he was ranked as the 3<sup>rd</sup> most bipartisan member of the House and introduced more bills than any other freshman representative. He has been a strong supporter of mariners and U.S.-flag shipping and is a proponent of worker rights and collective bargaining.

“We are pleased to endorse your reelection because of your strong, consistent support for America's maritime industry and your vigorous and persistent efforts on behalf of America's maritime workforce,” the unions’ endorsement letter reads. “Your work in Congress to achieve a fully-funded Maritime Security Program; to ensure full enforcement of America's U.S.-flag cargo preference shipping requirements; and to preserve our nation's coastwise shipping laws have helped ensure that

our nation has the U.S.-flag commercial sealift readiness capability and the American mariners needed by the Department of Defense to support American troops and America's interests overseas.”

The Fitzpatrick campaign highlighted the unions’ endorsement on their Facebook page. That posting was reposted on the M.E.B.A. Facebook site this morning. Check it out.

### **SEN. SULLIVAN SALUTED WITH PROP CLUB HONOR**

Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) was honored by the International Propeller Club last night in an online event with the prestigious “Salute to Congress” award, an honor bestowed upon longtime supporters of U.S.-flag shipping and the American maritime workforce. The annual award is reserved for a Member of Congress who demonstrates consistent support for the U.S.-flag Merchant Marine and American maritime industry.

Sen. Sullivan has been a reliably strong voice on behalf of our industry and during his online remarks last night had high words of praise for the Jones Act and U.S.-flag shipping M.E.B.A. was part of a coalition of maritime labor unions that recently endorsed Sen. Sullivan’s candidacy for re-election this November. In a letter sent to the Senator this summer by the M.E.B.A., MM&P, AMO & SIU, the unions stated, “Your work in Congress to achieve a fully funded Maritime Security Program; to ensure full enforcement of America's U.S.-flag cargo preference shipping requirements; and to preserve our nation’s coastwise shipping laws have helped ensure that our nation has the U.S.-flag commercial sealift readiness capability and the American mariners needed by the Department of Defense to support American troops and America’s interests overseas.”

Supporting lawmakers who understand the value of U.S.-flag shipping to our nation’s security and economy is the principal focus of M.E.B.A.’s Political Action Fund. Contributions are used to educate Members of Congress, regardless of political party, about the importance of our industry. The PAF also helps broaden our relationship with maritime-friendly politicians and helps elect those who recognize the significance of the U.S. Merchant Marine. Members, applicants and retirees are encouraged to contribute to the M.E.B.A. Political Action Fund online by visiting the Union homepage at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org) and selecting “Political Action Fund” to support this important cause.

### **CDC EXTENDS CRUISE SHIP “NO SAIL” ORDER THROUGH END OF MONTH**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) extended the No Sail Order for cruise ships an additional 30 days though the end of October. The order suspends passenger operations on cruise ships with the capacity to carry at least 250 passengers in waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction. CDC said that recent outbreaks on cruise ships overseas provide evidence that cruise ship travel continues to be problematic. They continue to monitor the issue. The cruise ship industry is in the process of implementing new pandemic protocols that they hope will allow them to resume safe operations before the end of the year.

Individual cruise lines announced extended cancellations, some through the end of the year. Carnival Cruise Lines is still looking to resume North American cruises in November on a limited basis. Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings said it would halt operations through November. Disney announced it would not resume North American operations this year.

## **COAST GUARD ALERT ON MALICIOUS EMAIL SPOOFING**

The Coast Guard issued a Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB 19-20) to highlight several recent cyber events involving increasingly sophisticated malicious email spoofing techniques within the Marine Transportation System (MTS).

The types of reported spoofing attacks included impersonating Coast Guard (uscg.mil) email addresses, and Coast Guard industry communications regarding Area Maritime Security Committee meetings. In one case, the opening of a malicious file caused a network compromise that resulted in additional spoofed emails that were sent to MTS port partners. These types of attacks have potential cascading consequences, and impacted organizations should immediately notify all affected stakeholders and local authorities.

The MSIB has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) in the “Documents & Member Notices” section.

## **AFL-CIO RELEASES ANOTHER GRIM “DEATH ON THE JOB” REPORT**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread, affecting more than 7.4 million Americans, with more than 210,000 deaths in the United States, the AFL-CIO released its annual “Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect” report, which contains data showing how inaction has worsened the current public health crisis. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said the pandemic’s crushing effects were assisted by the current administration’s war on working families through regulatory rollbacks, weakened regulations and resource cuts to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The report is based on Department of Labor injury and fatality data – for which 2018 is the latest available year.

Trumka said the President has “downplayed the role of safety agencies tasked with protecting workers and let corporate profit, rather than science, influence the protections we need to keep us safe from this disastrous pandemic. Now hardworking families are paying the price. We all deserve the best protections available. It is time to change course. Our lives and the future of the country depend on it.”

According to the report, in 2018, 5,250 working people were killed on the job and an estimated 95,000 died from occupational diseases. Each and every day, on average, 275 U.S. workers die from hazardous working conditions. Yet, he says, the administration continues to enact an aggressive deregulatory agenda, gut safety rules, propose deep cuts to worker safety and health training and job safety research, and has refused to move forward with new rules to protect workers against growing threats, including COVID-19 and workplace violence. The report shows that even before the pandemic, people of color were most at risk of dying or being injured in the workplace. Older workers also are at a great risk of dying on the job; workers 65 or older have nearly three times the risk of dying on the job as workers overall. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people between the ages of 65 and 74 also have a 90% higher chance of dying from COVID-19. “The data shows how ill-prepared the country was for the pandemic,” said Trumka. “This was a crisis in the making. There were warning signs everywhere, yet the Trump administration decided to ignore them and put everyone in harm’s way.” You can find the report here: <https://aflcio.org/reports/death-job-toll-neglect-2020>

## **4MF IS A WINNER AS RAFFLE CONCLUDES**

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 50/50 raffle in support of the M.E.B.A. Merchant Marine Memorial Foundation (4MF). The Memorial honors fallen mariners who helped blaze the proud

tradition our members continue today. The drawing had been planned for Tuesday but was delayed two days since a quorum was not present at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School membership meeting. Instead, the drawing took place earlier today at the NY/NJ meeting. The lucky winner was member Tom Priscu who will take home half the money collected for the raffle. The winning ticket was sold at the New Orleans Union hall.

Overall proceeds were likely affected by the onset of the pandemic, but the winner will still walk away with a sizeable sum and the 4MF will have additional funds to ensure it remains a suitable tribute to make us all proud. Thanks to everyone who bought a ticket for this great cause. Remember to continue to support the 4MF from time to time.

### **HALLS, OFFICES CLOSED ON MONDAY TO HONOR COLUMBUS, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed on Monday Oct. 14 in observance of Columbus Day and the original Admiral of the Ocean Seas - Christopher Columbus. In some states, the barbarism of the Columbus explorations prompted them to redub the federal holiday. A growing list of states, at least twelve - as well as Washington D.C. - changed Columbus Day to either "Native American Day" or "Indigenous Peoples' Day." Whatever, you choose to celebrate, have a terrific day on Monday.

Christopher Columbus has been described as a visionary who opened up the New World and conversely as a greedy imperialist who engaged in slave trading, genocide and stealing Indian land. Though he never set foot in North America, his celebrated voyages brought him to the Caribbean, Central and South America leading the way to European colonization and ushering in a new era of globalization.

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

Monday, November 2 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;  
Tuesday, November 3 – CMES@1430; 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.

***M.E.B.A. Election: Info on Obtaining a Duplicate Ballot is Available on the M.E.B.A. Website ([www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)) in the "Documents & Member Notices" Section***

-----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](mailto: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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org). Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.***