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 38 – September 18, 2025

In this issue – Agreement with Liberty, NCL Reopener, More Maersk Talks Needed//Credentialing Modernization in the Works//Bill to Speed Up New Unionized Worker First Contracts//Ship Blamed for Internet Disruption//Coalition Defends Net-Zero Framework//Bill Would Repeal Union-Busting Executive Orders//DOL Money for Shipbuilding//

NEW T.A. WITH LIBERTY, NCL REOPENER TALKS BEGIN, MAERSK CONTRACT INSUFFICIENT

M.E.B.A. negotiators have hammered out a new five-year agreement with Liberty Maritime to reward the hard work of our Deck and Engine officers in the fleet with strong wage, benefit, and work rule improvements.

The tentative agreement covers the five Pure Car/Truck Carriers (PC/TCs) LIBERTY PASSION, LIBERTY PEACE, LIBERTY PRIDE, LIBERTY PROMISE and LIBERTY POWER. Atlantic Coast V.P. Jason Callahan headed up negotiations assisted by HQ Contracts Rep. Mark Gallagher and rank-and-file input. The T.A. will be put to a ratification vote before the Union membership at the regular October meetings. If ratified, the new contract terms and benefits will be paid retroactively to October 1st, 2025. The Union will share more detailed information about the tentative agreement with the membership in the coming weeks and we look forward to the contract's ratification.

M.E.B.A. has begun early reopener talks with Norwegian Cruise Line in advance of the scheduled date of May 1, 2026. Executive V.P. Max Alper kicked off the first bargaining session with the company in a remote meeting that took place this week. Oakland Patrolman Chris Coombs and rank-and-file members Patrick Calder and Ryan Wall also took part in the session. The reopener addresses economics and conditions of employment. Our contract with NCL is in effect through June 30, 2034. The Union is encouraging rank-and-file members sailing on the PRIDE OF AMERICA to deliver their input and get involved with talks. Contact Max at the Oakland hall for more.

Tentative agreements with Maersk Line Ltd. for three contracts (MLL, E-Ships, and M-Ships) covering 19 vessels failed to win ratification at Union halls during the September membership meetings. The parties will return to the bargaining table on Wednesday, September 24th at M.E.B.A. Headquarters in Washington D.C.

MODERNIZATION OF MARINER CREDENTIALING SYSTEM

The U.S. Coast Guard is seeking a major upgrade to its mariner credentialing systems, awarding a $49.6 million contract to Virginia-based Stealth Solutions Inc. to overhaul the technology that supports the nation's maritime workforce. The five-year blanket purchase agreement is designed to streamline the way merchant mariners are credentialed.

The Mariner Credentialing Program (MCP) serves as a frontline security tool, screening maritime professionals and preventing bad actors from gaining access to critical infrastructure. In 2024 alone, the Coast Guard's National Maritime Center handled nearly 75,000 credential requests and 66,000 medical certificate applications. Officials say the modernization effort will allow for faster processing, stronger cybersecurity protections, and a more resilient system.

As part of the project, the Coast Guard has also awarded a $3.8 million task order for the development of NAVITA™, a new digital platform that will replace the current paper-heavy credentialing process. The updated system will introduce online applications, mariner profiles, and self-service features to reduce delays that have long frustrated working seafarers. Funding for the project comes through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act and ties into the Coast Guard's broader Force Design 2028 strategy, which emphasizes modern technology to make the service more agile and effective.

BILL TO SPEED UP NEWLY-UNIONIZED WORKER CBAs

Bipartisan sponsors have introduced a new bill to speed up the process of first collective bargaining agreements between a newly unionized group of workers and their employer. Representatives Donald Norcross (D-NJ) and Pete Stauber (R-MN) announced the introduction of the Faster Labor Contracts Act, abill supported by the M.E.B.A. According to Bloomberg Law, it takes an average of 458 days for unions and employers to agree on a first contract. The bill legislation will ensure that when workers vote to form a union, employers are not allowed to drag out negotiations on first contracts.

The bill would require that: After workers have voted to form a union, employers must begin negotiating with the new union within 10 days; If no agreement is reached after 90 days, the dispute will be referred to mediation; If mediation fails after 30 days, or additional periods agreed upon by both parties, the dispute will be referred to a binding 3-person arbitration panel to secure an initial contract. Senators Josh Hawley (R-MO) and Cory Booker (D-NJ) introduced the companion bill in the Senate.

"Contract delay tactics are a way for greedy corporations to deny workers a life-changing contract. This new bill would prevent employers from using an anti-worker tactic that allows them to refuse bargaining in good faith," said Transport Workers Union (TWU) International President John Samuelsen, who was re-elected to a new term this week. "It is also important to note that politicians from both major political parties are introducing this bill. There is real bipartisan support for advancing the livelihoods of American workers and their families and a recognition that corporations have too often refused to engage in good faith bargaining."

SHIP BLAMED FOR INTERNET DISRUPTION OVER THREE CONTINENTS

A commercial vessel is believed to have damaged a cluster of undersea cables in the Red Sea, causing widespread slowdowns in internet access across parts of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, experts said last week. The incident highlights just how fragile the world's digital lifelines remain, more than a year after a similar disruption in the same region.

According to the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC), 15 major submarine cables converge in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a narrow but critical waterway linking the Red Sea with the

Arabian Sea. The ICPC asserted that this particular incident was likely accidental. "They said 70% to 80% of faults are cause by accidental human activities, primarily fishing and ship anchors, with the remaining attributed to natural hazards or technical failures." Although it is unclear what caused the damage, the ICPC said the last documented "state-sponsored sabotage" of a submarine cable probably occurred during World War II. While internet providers typically reroute traffic through alternative networks, users in at least 10 countries felt the strain. India, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates were among those reporting slower service and higher latency. Concerns over cable security have mounted in the Red Sea corridor amid the broader instability linked to the Israel-Hamas conflict. Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have targeted ships in the region, were accused earlier this year of plotting to sabotage undersea cables — allegations they denied. Some of the disruptions in early 2024 were linked to vessels disabled by Houthi attacks, which may have inadvertently dragged their anchors across cable routes. The latest cut underscores the persistent vulnerabilities of the global internet infrastructure, much of which depends on a bundle of cables running through some of the world's most contested waters.

SHIPPING COALITION PROMOTES NET-ZERO FRAMEWORK AHEAD OF OCTOBER VOTE

A coalition of 180 shipping companies is pressing the world's leading maritime nations to back new international rules that would introduce the first global fee on greenhouse gas emissions. The appeal comes from the Getting to Zero Coalition, a partnership of shipping firms, governments, and international organizations. The group is urging member states of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to endorse the Net-Zero Framework during upcoming talks in London next month. The framework includes a new fuel standard for ships and a global pricing mechanism for emissions. If formally adopted in October 2025, the new rules would enter into force in 2027, and become mandatory for large oceangoing vessels over 5,000 gross tonnage, which IMO says emit 85% of the total CO2 emissions from international shipping.

The coalition said, "These investments in new technologies and infrastructure have the potential to deliver significant benefits for member countries' economies, creating millions of jobs in fast-growing sectors. But every year that action is delayed will compound into further delays down the road, as existing projects are scrapped and the planning cycle must begin anew. The absence of global regulatory guidance will raise the costs of change in the long run — costs that the industry, countries, and consumers will bear."

The U.S. government, however, is pushing back hard. The Trump administration has rejected the proposal outright, warning it could retaliate if countries move forward. A State Department spokesperson described the plan as "deeply flawed" and said Washington is preparing countermeasures — including tariffs, port levies, and visa restrictions — if the rule is adopted. Officials also indicated they would encourage allies to take parallel steps. Top U.S. cabinet officials echoed that sentiment in a joint statement last month, calling the plan "a global carbon tax on Americans imposed by an unaccountable U.N. body."

SENATE BILL WOULD REPEAL UNION-BUSTING EXECUTIVE ORDERS

A Senate bill headed up by mostly Democrats and a single Republican aims to repeal two union-busting executive orders and restore collective bargaining rights and workplace protections for federal workers. On the auspices of enhancing "the national security of the United States," two White House orders stripped hundreds of thousands of Federal employees of their union rights including M.E.B.A.

mariners sailing in the Military Sealift Command and Army Corps fleets. The Senate version of the Protect America's Workforce Act was introduced by Sens. Mark Warner (D-VA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Angela Alsobrooks (D-MD) and Tim Kaine (D-VA). Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1) and Jared Golden (D-ME-2) introduced companion legislation in the House.

"Federal government employees play a crucial role in public service by keeping our transportation systems safe, investigating accidents, overseeing critical weather forecasts, and providing essential supplies to the U.S. military. These workers already surrender many of the rights that private-sector employees enjoy, such as the ability to negotiate wages and benefits and the fundamental right to strike. Transportation labor urges the Senate to pass the bipartisan Protect America's Workforce Act and restore the basic collective bargaining rights of federal workers," said Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) President Greg Regan.

DOL: $8 MILLION AVAILABLE FOR U.S. SHIPBUILDING
The Department of Labor announced the availability of up to $8 million in funding to help reinvigorate the U.S. shipbuilding industry. The project will connect U.S. technical education centers and community colleges with similar training programs in several allied countries – including the Republic of Korea and Japan, the world's second and third leading shipbuilders after China – and establish international collaboration to help American workers learn advanced shipbuilding capabilities.

Administered by the department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs, the grant funding aims to advance the next generation of American shipbuilders through hands-on, cutting-edge training programs developed in conjunction with international partners. The funding will also establish a specialized, internationally recognized trade curricula that will enable more advanced training in the U.S. Eligible applicants include any commercial, international, educational, or non-profit organizations, including any faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, or public international organizations. The deadline for applications is Friday, Sept. 26, 2025.

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*
Monday, October 6 – **Boston**@1200. **Seattle (Fife)**@1300.
Tuesday, October 7 – **CMES**@1430; **Charleston**@1400; **Houston**@1315; **Oakland**@1230.
Wednesday, October 8 – **Jacksonville**@1300; **New Orleans**@1315; **Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@**1300 **(No Voting) – Register by emailing** mebahq@mebaunion.org
Thursday, October 9 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@**1230; **NY/NJ@**1300; **Norfolk@**1300; **Tampa@**1300.
Friday, October 10 – **Honolulu**@1100

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

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. Website: www.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. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or www.mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org