

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 3 – January 21, 2021



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PUSH TO PRIORITIZE MARINERS FOR VACCINATIONS GROWS

U.S. shipping federations and other maritime entities are continuing the call to prioritize mariners for COVID-19 vaccinations in the interests of preventing supply line disruptions. Last week, we reported that eight maritime labor unions, including the M.E.B.A., appealed to the National Governors Association and Immunization Practices Advisory Committee to speed up the vaccination timetable for deep-sea mariners. This week, USA Maritime has urged the United States Transportation Command and Maritime Administration to join the fight to expedite vaccine access for our critical mariner workforce. USA Maritime is a coalition of maritime unions, associations and shipping companies – including the M.E.B.A. and AMC – fighting for the U.S. Merchant Marine.

In a letter sent to TRANSCOM Commander General Stephen Lyons and Acting Maritime Administrator Douglas Burnett, USA Maritime noted that, "It is not an exaggeration to warn that the military and economic security of our nation will be at risk if the distribution of vaccines to seafarers is not handled in the most expeditious manner possible."

As mariners work within close proximity aboard ship, any outbreak tends to cripple schedules and smooth operations. For commercial cargo, the domestic economy is negatively affected in such cases. USA Maritime points out that the impacts of any outbreak aboard ships carrying military cargo are even greater "with the lives of American troops overseas endangered and the ability of the Department of Defense to protect the interests of the United States threatened."

The International Chamber of Shipping also issued calls for governments to put seafarers and frontline maritime shore workers at the head of the vaccine queue. Guy Platten, ICS Secretary General said, "Governments must class seafarers as 'key workers' and give them priority access to the vaccine, as the inability to rotate crews from their ships risks the passage of the critical medical materials needed for the global vaccination effort."

BUTTIGIEG CONFIRMATION HEARING; TROTTEBERG NOMINATED AS DEPUTY AT DOT

At a confirmation hearing earlier today, Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee members reviewed the nomination of Pete Buttigieg to be the next Secretary of Transportation and peppered him with a series of related questions. The former South Bend, Indiana Mayor, Buttigieg

came to national prominence in the Democratic primaries as well as his subsequent work on behalf of President Biden's election. At the hearing, he expressed his strong support for the Jones Act in a question posed to him by incoming Commerce Committee Chair Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA).

M.E.B.A. and the American Maritime Congress, as part of USA Maritime, issued support for the nomination and urged the Committee to report it favorably. They said, "The challenges facing U.S.-flag shipping companies are significant, ranging from the impact of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic on our ability to support America's economic and military security to the increasing threat posed by the aggressive competition from the People's Republic of China as it expands its maritime presence throughout the world. These challenges require immediate and meaningful responses from our government and call for a Secretary of Transportation who will reflect President Biden's position that the "U.S.-flag merchant marine and the men and women who operate U.S.-flag ships are crucial to America's national security, our international trade relationships, and economic development."

In related news, Polly Trottenberg was nominated to serve alongside Buttigieg as DOT's Deputy Secretary. Her position is subject to Senate confirmation as well. Her hearing has not yet been scheduled but is expected in the coming days. M.E.B.A. has had a good working relationship with her when she formerly served as DOT's Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy and Under-Secretary for Policy in the Obama administration and during her recent service as New York City's DOT commissioner.

JONES ACT-HATING CONGRESSMAN LAUNCHES ANOTHER ASSAULT

Congressman Ed Case (D-HI) is continuing his anti-Jones Act drumbeat in this new session of Congress with the re-introduction of several bills to compromise the Merchant Marine Act of 1920. Upon the introduction of the bills, Rep. Case blamed the lion's share of Hawaii's high cost of living on the Jones Act. He continues to characterize the statute in terms based on half-truths that will likely prove heartening to the CATO Institute and other entities bent on opening up U.S. coastwise trade to foreign entities. The bills as introduced in the last session of Congress failed to win a committee hearing - or any co-sponsors - in the last session of Congress and did not advance. The three bills authored by Rep. Case, include:

H.R. 298 - the "Noncontiguous Shipping Relief Act," to exempt certain noncontiguous trade (Alaska, Hawaii & Puerto Rico) from the Jones Act. H.R. 299 - the "Noncontiguous Shipping Reasonable Rate Act" which "benchmarks the definition of a "reasonable rate" which domestic shippers can charge as no more than ten percent above international shipping rates for comparable routes." Finally, H.R. 300 - the "Noncontiguous Shipping Competition Act" would rescind the Jones Act "wherever monopolies or duopolies in noncontiguous Jones Act shipping develop."

PRESIDENT FIRES ANTI-LABOR NLRB COUNSEL

President Biden has fired National Labor Relations Board General Counsel Peter Robb after the lawyer refused to submit his requested resignation. Robb was appointed to the position in 2017 and helped steer the Board through a series of anti-worker decisions.

The labor community believes that Robb has helped reshape the Board from one charged with protecting workers' organizing and collective bargaining rights to one that sought reversals of pro-worker policies. The General Counsel has tremendous sway with the five-member Board, oversees the day-to-day agenda and possesses the power to initiate enforcement activities independent of the Board.

CMES OFFERS GUIDANCE ON STCW ETO ENDORSEMENT

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School has made guidance available to members on how to apply for an STCW Endorsement as Electro-Technical Officer 750kW-1,000 HP or more. You can navigate to that page by visiting www.mebaschool.org. The School provides links to information and documents needed for application. They highly recommend that members utilize Option 4:

1) Any person who holds an STCW endorsement as OICEW, Second Engineer Officer, or Chief Engineer Officer has met this sea service requirement, no additional sea service required, AND, 2) Must provide evidence of meeting the standard of competence specified in Section A-III/6 of the STCW Code, AND, 3) Must provide: a. Basic and Advanced Fire Fighting (within 5 years unless previously completed); b. Hold or Qualify for Medical First-Aid Provider; c. Hold or Qualify for Proficiency in Survival Craft (Unlimited or Limited); d. Current Basic Training.

Links to the complete NVIC as well as the NMC's Application for Merchant Mariner Credential (Form CG-719B) are also included on the site.

APPROVAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF TRAINING VESSELS FOR TEXAS A&M AND MAINE MARITIME

The Maritime Administration (MarAd) has authorized the construction of two more National Security Multi-Mission Vessels (NSMV) in an expected series of five. The NSMVs will replace the aging training vessels at five maritime academies. Each ship will be capable of supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in times of need. They are being constructed at Philly Shipyard, in Philadelphia, PA.

MarAd's approval greenlights the third and fourth newbuilds which will replace vessels at Maine Maritime Academy and Texas A&M Maritime Academy. The first vessel in the series will replace the almost 60-year old SUNY training ship EMPIRE STATE VI. The second will replace the 53-year old TS KENNEDY at Massachusetts Maritime Academy. The yard said the first vessel will be ready for delivery by early 2023. Details of the projected fifth NMSV have not been announced but many expect it to be slotted to the California State University Maritime Academy.

NAUTILUS INTERNATIONAL FIGHTS MARINER CRIMINALIZATION WITH NEW APP

Nautilus International has intensified efforts to bring attention to unfair mariner criminalization. Seafarers are too often treated as scapegoats after an incident at sea, and according to a recent survey, most mariners feel they could face criminal prosecution for incidents beyond their control.

As well as continuing to lobby international governments for a fairer approach, Nautilus International is taking practical steps to support its members through a newly developed Fair Treatment App. When downloaded to a mobile phone, the app can be used create an incident report and collate information about any events that occur while they are at work and out at sea. Through the app, union members also have access to advice on what they should do in case of emergency as well as contact details for local legal support if required. The app functions both on and offline to support seafarers all over the world, regardless of their location and access to the internet.

They call on members to watch and share a new animation (shared on the M.E.B.A. Facebook page) and to download the app to their phone to ensure that they are protected if an incident occurs.

GREAT LAKES - ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY TRADE WAS “RESILIENT” DURING PANDEMIC

The bi-national commissions overseeing the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Seaway issued a statement remarking that the system has fared much better than some expected given the scope of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. The Canadian side - the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation (SLSMC) said that nearly 38 million tons of cargo transited the system during the 2020 navigation season, which closely matched last year’s results. The Great Lakes St. Lawrence River System is a “marine highway” that extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. The binational St. Lawrence Seaway serves as the linchpin within the broader waterway, connecting the lower St. Lawrence River to the Great Lakes.

SLSMC President Terence Bowles said the impacts of the pandemic differed by cargo type and limited total cargo volumes in 2020. “The Seaway’s resiliency and agility in operating allowed it to handle numerous steel slab movements and a record grain crop in 2020,” he said.

Craig Middlebrook, the Deputy Administrator of the American side - the U.S. Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS) said, “The Seaway’s 62nd navigation season was one of the most remarkable in history. Despite all the challenges throughout the year, it was one of the safest and smoothest seasons on record. The final tonnage results continue to demonstrate the resilience of the binational waterway and its ability to remain competitive in the global marketplace.”

Both SLSMC and GLS are now turning their attention towards the winter period, when a significant portion of maintenance work is carried out to maintain critical assets and ensure the long-term safety and reliability of the Seaway system.

Regarding Great Lakes shipping in general, Mark Barker, President of Interlake Steamship called the shipping season "one of the most dynamic in recent history." He said, “It wasn’t necessarily a banner year for cargoes carried, but I’m extremely proud of the resourcefulness and responsiveness of our entire industry and especially the women and men onboard our ships in keeping the American economy moving forward these last 10 months.”

LAST WEEK TO APPLY FOR UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS

M.E.B.A. families have until January 31, 2021 to apply for college education assistance money through Union Plus. M.E.B.A. members, retirees and their families - as well as members of affiliated M.E.B.A. unions - are eligible courtesy of the Union’s enrollment in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from life insurance to financing children’s educations. Visit www.unionplus.org/scholarship for more. Families of M.E.B.A. members or affiliated members are among past scholarship money recipients. Union Plus Scholarship are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school or a recognized technical or trade school. Recipients are selected based on academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor.

Applications can be submitted up until Sunday January 31, 2021, at noon (EST). Those arriving after the deadline will not be considered. The award date is May 31, 2021. During the first week of June 2021, award recipients will be notified. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended. The required essays can account for up to half your total score. Scholarship applicants are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators. Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2021. Students may re-apply each year. Get the official application and all the details including eligibility criteria by visiting unionplus.org/scholarship Since 1991, the

Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$4.5 million to students of union families. Over 3,000 union families have benefited from the program.

UNION-MADE PLAYOFF PARTY

As the NFL season hurtles toward its exciting finale, this weekend's match-ups that determine the February 7th Super Bowl combatants will be best celebrated by supporting union-made products when assembling game-day ingredients. COVID-19 may try to dull down the fun this year, but these worker-friendly products will help keep you going strong and guarantee an epic party for all attending football fanatics.

Beer - Anchor Brewing Company (ILWU); Bass (IAM); Beck's (IAM); Blue Moon (IUOE, IBT); Budweiser (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Coors (IBT); Dundee (IBT); Goose Island (IBT); Hamm's (UAW, IAM, IBT); Henry Weinhard's (IUOE, IBT); Keystone (IAM IUOE); Kirin (IAM); Land Shark Lager (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Leinenkugel (UAW, IUOE, IBT); Mad River (IAM, IBT); Mendocino (IBT); Michelob (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Miller (UAW, IAM, IUOE, IBT); Natural Ice (IAM IUOE, IBT); O'Doul's (IAM, IUOE, IBT); Pabst (UAW); Rolling Rock (IAM, IBT); Schlitz (UAW); Shock Top (IAM, IUOE, IBT).

Soft Drinks - Barq's Root Beer (IBT); Coke (IBT); Dr. Pepper (UFCW, UAW); Pepsi (IBT, UAW); Sprite (IBT, UAW).

Snacks - Act II Popcorn (UFCW); Cheez-It (BCTGM); Cheetos (BCTGM); Chex Mixes (IBT); Doritos (BCTGM, IBT); Rold Gold Pretzels (BCTGM, IBT); Slim Jim (UFCW, IBT); Sun Chips (BCTGM, IBT); Wheat Thins (BCTGM, IBT).

Check out <https://labor411.org/listing-region/consumer-products/> for other union-made products.

ONLINE FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – (All times are local)

Monday, February 8 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, February 9 – CMES@1430 (*CMES Meeting will likely be conducted in-person*); Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, February 10 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, February 11 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Tuesday, February 16 – Honolulu@1100.

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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.