

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"



M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED TO FORTIFY LABOR RIGHTS

The White House announced this week that the President has issued an Executive Order establishing a Task Force to help empower workers. Vice President Kamala Harris is charged with heading up the Task Force which will be comprised of a long list of cabinet members and top policy advisers. They will make recommendations on how to encourage worker organizing and collective bargaining. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh was chosen as the Vice Chair of the new group.

The Executive Order states, "...Substantial evidence shows that union membership increases wages, the likelihood of receiving employer-provided benefits, and job security. Union membership also gives workers the means to build the power to ensure that their voices are heard in their workplaces, their communities, and in the Nation...The mission of the Task Force will be to mobilize the federal government's policies, programs, and practices to empower workers to organize and successfully bargain with their employers. This mission includes looking for ways to increase worker power in areas of the country with restrictive labor laws, for marginalized workers including women and people of color, and for workers in industries that are difficult to organize and lack labor protections."

The AFL-CIO was heartened by the issuance of the new E.O. and put out a statement applauding the President's appreciation that "unionism is the single most effective tool we have for building a fairer economy and a more just society."

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka noted that the newly created Task Force "will put organizing and collective bargaining at the center of the federal government — part of their steadfast commitment to worker empowerment."

FRC COMPLETES REVIEW, FORWARDS REPORT

A six-person rank-and-file Financial Review Committee spent three days at M.E.B.A. Headquarters this week poring over the Union's financial records for calendar year 2020. The FRC was created as a Democratic safeguard adopted by the M.E.B.A. in the mid-1990s to examine the Union's finances from the previous year.

This year, the Committee was made up of the following six members: Torey Zingales (NY/NJ) who served as Chairman, Marshall Townsend (Houston), Charles Apudo (Tampa), Chris Nardone (Norfolk), Seth Massey (Oakland) and Steven Walker (Seattle). The FRC members signed off on a

report that will be made available at the halls and voted upon by members at next week's regular meetings.

COAST GUARD MINIMUM DRUG TESTING RATE SET AT 50% FOR 2021

The Coast Guard has set the calendar year 2021 minimum random drug testing rate at 50 percent of covered crewmembers effective for the 2021 calendar year. The rate is unchanged from the last two years and indicates that the positive rate for the previous year was greater than one percent. The rate was at 25% in 2018. The Coast Guard's Patrick Mannion can be contacted by email for further information at DAPI@uscg.mil.

SENATE ICEBREAKER BILL LOOKS TO KEEP LAKES COMMERCE MOVING

Shipping interests on the Great Lakes are hailing new legislation in the Senate that may clear the way for Congress to address our inadequate icebreaker capabilities on the Great Lakes. Every year, ancient U.S. icebreakers succumb to engine failures and other age-related problems that stifle the flow of commerce on the Great Lakes. Jobs across the country are being lost as Great Lakes shipping companies struggle to move the vital building blocks of America during the ice season.

This last week, Senate bill S. 576 was passed by the Senate Commerce Committee with a series of important provisions that could lead to U.S. icebreaking relief. The Committee passed the Great Lakes Winter Commerce Act with an important substitute amendment that would not only direct government agencies to assess the impacts of the current weakened state of our icebreaker fleet, but would also authorize \$350 million in Fiscal Year 2022 for the acquisition of a new Great Lakes icebreaker as capable as the workhorse vessel USCGC MACKINAW.

Over the past seven years, the economy lost over \$2 billion and more than 10,000 jobs due to Great Lakes cargo being delayed or even left at the dock with no assistance available to safely move ships through the ice.

The Lake Carriers Association, which represents 16 companies that operate vessels on the Great Lakes including M.E.B.A.-contracted Interlake Steamship Company, intends to help see this much-needed legislation through to Senate and House passage. It's a good idea for you to contact your Congressional delegation to co-sponsor and support this important legislation. The House companion bill to S. 576 is H.R. 1561.

UNIONS OBSERVE WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

On Wednesday, April 28, labor unions somberly commemorated Workers Memorial Day, a day to honor workers who have died on the job, and to recommit to the fight for safe and healthful workplaces.

Many job hazards are unregulated and uncontrolled. Some employers cut corners and violate the law, putting workers in serious danger and costing lives. Workers who report job hazards or job injuries are fired or disciplined. Employers contract out dangerous work to try to avoid responsibility. As a result, each year thousands of workers are killed and millions more injured or diseased because of their jobs.

Greg Regan, president of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), said that as we remember those injured and killed on the job, "we are reminded in the starkest ways that safety in the workplace doesn't simply happen. It is created through bold, collective action, including strong union

contracts, thoughtful policy solutions, and federal leaders who are willing to meet the needs of working people.”

He pointed out, “as we begin to recover from this public health and economic crisis, our work is far from over. Ensuring the safety of our frontline transportation workforce – and all working people – will be instrumental as we reopen our economy and rebuild our country. That is why today, and every day, TTD and our 33 unions renew our collective commitment to secure strong safety and health protections for our members, and ensure our transportation system is safe, secure, and capable of meeting this country’s economic needs.”

CDC EXPECTS TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR CRUISING IN JULY

Amid a huge push by the passenger vessel industry, as well as the States of Alaska and Florida, to restart cruising in this country following the long pandemic lay-off, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) appears to be clearing the way for a mid-July resumption of business.

Cruise interests appealed to the CDC to relax their restrictive Conditional Sailing Order, in effect through November of this year, that is obstructing industry efforts to resume operation of cruise ships making U.S. port stops. Recently, Norwegian Cruise Line and others put forward a plan to resume cruising in July with new and extensive health and safety plans. The NCL-America vessel PRIDE OF AMERICA, crewed by M.E.B.A. officers, is one of the ships that would begin sailing again this summer. However, that plan is contingent on the CDC’s lifting or relaxation of the CSO.

Now, the CDC, in a letter sent to cruise companies, announced clarifications to their CSO that they say will conditionally allow cruise ships to resume operations “without compromising safety.”

Among other conditions, the letter indicated that cruise ship sailing will be cleared under the modified CSO if a vessel has at least 98% of its crew and 95% of its passengers fully vaccinated. CDC also plans to ease a series of other stringent conditions in the CSO including the requirement for conducting test cruises at least 60 days before a live cruise, and the requirements for viral diagnostic tests for crews and passengers.

STILL TIME TO REGISTER FOR & ATTEND MONDAY’S ONLINE HQ MEETING

M.E.B.A. Headquarters will host a monthly online informational membership meeting on Monday.

Headquarters officials will be available to talk to Members, Applicants and Retirees who sign up and virtually attend the meeting. It takes place on the Zoom platform on Monday, May 3 at 1300 (eastern time).

Members, applicants and retirees will need to register in advance for this meeting to mebahq@mebaunion.org Participants can register for the meeting up until the morning of May 3 at 0900 (eastern time).

When registering for the Online Headquarters Informational Meeting members and applicants should provide their full names and proof of good standing - such as last dues receipt/service charge number or statement of your enrollment in Dues Check-Off (DCO) with a particular bargaining unit. Retirees should provide their full names and indicate their retired status. Upon confirmation of your status, the Zoom access link will be emailed to you shortly before the meeting.

**REMEMBER! ALL REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS
ARE BACK TO IN-PERSON FORMAT**

Over a year after the pandemic prompted the Union to begin conducting its monthly membership meetings in an online format, the M.E.B.A. announced that the regular May 2021 meetings are again taking place exclusively in-person at each of the 13 meeting locations.

The monthly membership meetings at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School have been conducted in-person since November. That format has worked out well. Meeting participants observe CDC guidelines including mask usage and social distancing, something that will be in full practice at the in-person membership meetings at all 13 M.E.B.A. meeting locations in May. We look forward to seeing you live and in-person at one of the upcoming meetings!

MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS – ALL *REGULAR* MEETINGS ARE IN-PERSON

(All times are local)

Monday, May 3 – Boston@1200; Seattle-Fife@1300; Online Headquarters Informational Meeting@1300.

Tuesday, May 4 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, May 5 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, May 6 – L.A.-San Pedro@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, May 7 – 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.