

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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FOOD AID PROGRAM IN QUESTION AFTER USAID TARGETED

The Trump Administration's ongoing dismantlement of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is concerning news for American farmers as well U.S.-flag shipping interests, among others. USAID is the primary U.S. government agency for humanitarian and development aid, supporting countries worldwide in combating poverty, disease, and crises while helping to advance democracy and other U.S. interests.

In coordination with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the USAID administers food aid programs that provide cargoes for U.S.-flag shipping including the P.L.-480 Food for Peace program (FFP). The FFP helps feed countries in need while supporting American agriculture and maritime industries. In 2020, the U.S. government bought \$2.1 billion in food aid from American farmers. In addition, the requirement that at least 50% of international food aid cargoes be carried on U.S.-flag ships has been vital for the industry and important in maintaining a pool of qualified American mariners. The future of international food aid programs is now uncertain in light of the Administration's executive order to pause all foreign aid programs, and it is unclear if they will be maintained under a different authority. While American farmers could lose a major purchaser that may increase price volatility in domestic markets, a possible end to AID-administered food aid programs would also lead to fewer cargoes for U.S.-flagships.

Declining food aid cargoes could contribute to a smaller mariner pool that further complicates the nation's ability to fulfill DOD sealift requirements. Many U.S.-flag ships that carry USAID cargoes participate in the Maritime Security Program (MSP), which ensures that militarily useful ships remain available for defense needs. APL, Hapag-Lloyd, Maersk Line and Liberty Maritime vessels, among others, are key transporters of food aid cargoes.

Unfortunately, USAID has a poor track record of using the cargo preference waiver process to avoid employing U.S. flagships and American mariners whenever possible for shipping food aid cargo. Instead, they often prefer to use foreign mariners and vessels at nearly every opportunity. To make matters worse, USAID consistently lobbies to reduce the amount of actual American-grown commodities distributed while also attempting to replace P.L.-480 cargoes with "cash aid" or direct purchases of foreign food aid. This undermines the original intent of the Food for Peace program,

leaves American farmers and mariners at a disadvantage, and reduces the overall number of U.S.-flag bulk vessels, ultimately harming our nation's interests.

MOLINARO TAPPED FOR FTA

Former Congressman Marc Molinaro has been nominated to serve as the next Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration. Representing New York's 19th District, Molinaro served a term in Congress in which he was strong on transportation and labor issues.

The M.E.B.A. issued a statement in support of the nomination. M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac noted, "Congratulations to Marc Molinaro on his nomination to serve as the next FTA Administrator, responsible for overseeing our nation's ferry programs. Throughout his public service career, Molinaro has shown a commitment to collaborating with all stakeholders — both labor and industry — to find practical solutions to address our nation's ongoing challenges. We are proud to support his nomination to lead the FTA and look forward to working with him to advance key policies that promote safe, efficient, and reliable public transit systems. This includes strong investments in our maritime transportation system and the dedicated professionals who keep our passenger ferries moving."

WHITE HOUSE LOOKS TO VOID RECENT LABOR CONTRACTS FOR FEDERAL WORKERS

In a move to reshape the federal workforce, President Trump issued a memorandum last week nullifying labor contracts with the federal government that were finalized within the 30 days of his taking office. According to the memo, this policy targets specific agreements negotiated during the final weeks of the Biden administration. It characterizes these so-called "last-minute, lame-duck" deals as deliberate attempts to sidestep the electorate's will and limit the president's authority over the executive branch. It states that contracts not yet approved by the appropriate agency head may be subject to cancellation. However, agreements finalized outside the 30-day timeframe would apparently be unaffected.

The White House referenced the contract between the Social Security Administration and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), which includes secured telework and remote work rights for employees for five years. AFGE maintains that legally approved union contracts are binding, and that the president lacks the authority to unilaterally alter these agreements.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler equated the cancellation of federal worker CBAs to "union busting." "Now more than ever," she noted "federal workers need strong collective bargaining agreements so they are protected and can continue to do the essential work we all depend on: delivering Social Security and disability checks, caring for our veterans, or keeping our food and transportation safe. These attempts to break our contracts will not silence our voices."

M.E.B.A. OAKLAND HOSTING CANDIDATE FORUM

M.E.B.A.'s Union hall in Oakland will host a Mayoral candidate forum scheduled for the end of February in a format similar to the successful City Council debate held at the hall in mid-October. The Oakland Maritime Access, Sustainability, and Trade (O-MAST) coalition, in partnership with the M.E.B.A. and ILWU, is sponsoring the event scheduled for February 25th (from 1730 to 1930). It is open to any interested area members. O-MAST is a federation of maritime, transportation, logistics, labor, and community stakeholders supporting the long-term viability of the Port of Oakland. At the event, candidates running for both Mayor and Oakland District 2 Council will speak about the issues

relevant to Oakland's working waterfront. Each candidate will provide a brief statement on their thoughts on O-MAST's priorities and their intentions regarding the Port if elected. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to mingle with candidates and ask questions both before and after statements are given. Contact the Oakland hall for additional info.

30% DISCOUNT ON FLOWERS WITH UNION PLUS

Members and applicants can take heart with a Valentine's Day special through Union Plus that will sweep you off your feet! Right now, you can get a 30% discount on flowers, gifts and more thanks to an arrangement with Teleflora. Go to the Union Plus website (www.unionplus.org) and click on "Flowers & Gifts" where you can cover your butt this Valentine's Day with a few clicks. They make it easy for you and offer up some deals on flower arrangements, chocolates and gift baskets. Union Plus programs, which are available to M.E.B.A. members, applicants, retirees and our affiliates, provide a vast range of money-saving benefits and services. The M.E.B.A. is enrolled in dozens of moneysaving U.P. programs ranging from life insurance to auto services discounts.

UNION-MADE SUPER BOWL

You should stock up on union-made goodies to celebrate America's greatest sporting event! These worker-friendly products will help keep you going strong and guarantee an epic party for all football fanatics as well as casual Super Bowl attendees who have more fun at half-time! Check out these union-made Super Bowl party products, brought to you by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM), the UAW, Machinists (IAM), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), Teamsters (IBT) and other unions and worker-friendly companies. Note: These suggestions represent only a partial list. There are many more worker-friendly treats. **Beer** - 1845 Pils, Bass Pale Ale, Beck's, Blue Moon, Budweiser, Busch, Butte Creek, Coors Light, George Killian's Irish Red, Goose Island, Hamm's, Henry Weinhard's, Hoegaarden, Iron City, Keystone Light, Kingfisher Premium Lager, Kirin Ichiban, Labatt Blue, LandShark Lager, Leffe Blond, Lionshead, Michelob, Mickey's, Miller Light, Miller Genuine Draft, Molson Canadian, Moosehead, Natural Ice, Natural Light, O'Doul's (non-alcoholic), Olde English 800, Pabst, Red Stripe, Red Tail Ale, Rolling Rock, Samuel Adams, Schlitz, Shock Top, Steel Reserve, Steelhead, Stegmaier and Stella Artois. **Meat** - Alexander & Hornung, Always Tender, Ball Park, Banquet, Butterball, Dearborn Sausage, Farmer John, Farmland, Foster Farms, Fresh Mark, Hebrew National, Hormel, Klement's, Omaha Steaks, Oscar Mayer, Prairie Farms, Thumann's and Tyson, Usinger's, and Wayne Farms. **Chips, Salsa, Snacks, and Sides** - Act II Popcorn, Bagel Bites, Bugles, B&M Baked Beans, Cheetos, Cheez-It, Chex Mix, Doritos, Fritos, Humpty Dumpty Potato Chips, Lay's, Mission Chips, Old El Paso chips, dips and salsa, Pace Salsa, Pirate's Booty, Rice Krispies Treats, Ritz Crackers, Rold Gold Pretzels, Ruffles, Smartfood Popcorn, Stacy's Pita Chips, Sun Chips, Tostitos chips and salsa, Snyder of Berlin chips and Wheat Thins. **Soft Drinks** - 7UP, A&W, Barq's, Canada Dry, Coca-Cola, Dr. Pepper, Gatorade, Mountain Dew, Pepsi and Sprite.

HOCKEY PLAYERS UNIONS JOIN AFL-CIO

Two of professional hockey's North American players' associations - the National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA) and the Professional Hockey Players' Association (PHPA) are formally affiliating with the AFL-CIO and joining its Sports Council. The NHLPA represents approximately 750 professional hockey players across 32 teams in the NHL, while the PHPA represents approximately 1,800 professional hockey players across 61 teams in the American Hockey League and the ECHL. Their membership brings the total number of unions under the nation's largest labor federation to 63, representing more than 15 million workers.

The AFL-CIO Sports Council was formed in 2022 to build power across unions in the sports industry, amplify the voices of athletes and shine a light on the challenges they face as workers. It includes unions with members across professional sports: the NFL Players Association (NFLPA), the NWSL Players Association (NWSLPA), the USL Players Association-CWA (USLPA-CWA), the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA), the Major League Soccer Players Association (MLSFA) and the Women's National Basketball Players Association (WNBPA).

SAFETY AWARD NOMINATION PERIOD

The award window to submit nominations for the Jones F. Devlin Safety Awards and Safety Achievement Awards is open now and will only be open for the next few weeks. It only takes 5-10 minutes to complete. The awards are issued by the Chamber of Shipping of America (CSA).

Everyone is welcome to participate, not just CSA members. Links to the website to submit awards: Jones F. Devlin Safety Awards for two or more years without a Lost Time Incident: Jones F. Devlin Safety Award - <https://csashipping.org/awards-program/jones-f-devlin-safety-award/> Safety Achievement Awards for outstanding feats of safety by a vessel: Safety Achievement Award - <https://csashipping.org/awards-program/ship-safety-achievement-award/> Reach out to Awards@CSAShipping.org with any questions.

CAA REUNION AT CMES WILL INCLUDE 150th CELEBRATION

The entire M.E.B.A. membership, active and retired, and especially Calhoon graduates, are invited to the Calhoon Alumni Association (CAA) Reunion scheduled for June 27-29 at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. The weekend will include a celebration of the M.E.B.A.'s 150th anniversary. The Union is 150 years old as of February 23 and there will be much rejoicing.

For those of you who have not yet attended a reunion, here is some of what you can expect: pit beef, steamed crabs, burgers and dogs, pizza and subs, live music, swimming pool, beer, wine, soft drinks, ice cream, light breakfast, a Friday morning golf outing, a sundown ceremony and other surprises, sea stories and a great time with old classmates, shipmates and maritime friends.

Information, event fees, and registration forms will soon be found on the CMES website located at www.mebaschool.org. Look for the CAA page link. The weekend kicks off with the traditional Golf Tournament on Friday, June 27 at 1000. There will be an evening muster at the Calhoon Saloon later that evening. The party on the Manor House Lawn will take place all day Saturday, June 28. This is a great family event that you should be sure to sign up for. Direct any questions to caa@mebaschool.org and check out the School website to get the complete lowdown. Take this opportunity to spread the word throughout the M.E.B.A. world as well as to past Calhoon School cadets, instructors, shipmates, friends, and families.

PROTEST AT DOL

On Wednesday, federal employees, union members, labor activists, and their supporters assembled outside the Department of Labor (DOL) in Washington DC to air their discontent with the perceived interference of the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency on the agency responsible for safeguarding fundamental workplace rights. Speakers at the rally — including workers, labor leaders, members of Congress, and AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler — highlighted the critical role the DOL plays and stressed the need to prevent “an unelected billionaire” from dismantling it. That same

day, the AFL-CIO, AFGE, AFSCME, SEIU, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), and the Economic Policy Institute filed an emergency lawsuit to block Musk's DOGE from illegally accessing the DOL's secure systems and confidential information.

“Elon Musk and DOGE want us to think that the Department of Labor is some bureaucracy that doesn't matter, President Shuler declared. “That could not be further from the truth. This is about our health, our safety, our fair pay, and our jobs — and these are the people who fight for us. An unelected billionaire does not get to decide whether workers get their paychecks. Whether we get Medicare. Whether we get overtime. Whether we get home safely from the job. Whether we can form a union! No one voted for this undermining of our rights — and that's why we're standing up!”

WSF FINDS HOME FOR RETIRED FERRY

After a few stops and starts, the retired Super-class Washington State Ferry ELWHA has a new home. WSF had previously sold the vessel for scrap to a South American businessman before the deal fell through back in September. The ELWHA, built in the late 1960s, sailed in the WSF fleet until its decommissioning in 2020. Instead of going to scrap, Everett Ship Repair purchased the vessel for \$100,000 with plans to modify and convert it to a floating office and warehouse space at its shipyard.

WSF hopes to sell and transfer two remaining retired boats, KLAHOWYA and HYAK, to free more dock space at its Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility for planned and unplanned maintenance on its current fleet.

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*

Monday, March 3 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, March 4 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, March 5 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, March 6 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, March 7 – **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 Calhoun 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