

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
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WALSH TO EXIT DOL; SET TO HEAD UP HOCKEY PLAYERS' UNION

Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh is set to leave the Biden administration to head up the National Hockey League's player union as Executive Director, as soon as this month. He will take the reins at the NHL Players' Association which had been scouring for a new leader since April of last year to replace Donald Fehr, who has served in that position since 2010.

In 2021, Walsh became the first union member to serve as Labor Secretary in more than 40 years. He joined the Laborers' Union, Local 223 as a young man, eventually becoming the head of the organization, also led the Boston Building and Construction Trades Council and served as the Mayor of Boston. He has gamely sought to implement the President's pro-labor agenda, can tout a host of successes but also faced setbacks such as a drop in union density and an unsatisfying end to the recent railroad strike that left workers without paid sick days. Walsh is a longtime hockey fan and Boston Bruins season ticket holder. It is not clear yet who his replacement will be at the DOL. Julie Su is the Deputy Labor Secretary and may be considered for the top job.

M.E.B.A. PART OF TOP LEVEL AFL-CIO MEETINGS

M.E.B.A. took part in AFL-CIO Executive Committee meetings last week leading into this week's Executive Council meetings that concluded earlier today. Back in June of last year, the M.E.B.A., for the first time in its history, was elected to the AFL-CIO Executive Council. The AFL-CIO Executive Council sets the Federation's policies and goals.

Last week M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha participated in five of the AFL-CIO's Executive Committees that met at the Federation's Headquarters in Washington D.C. M.E.B.A. took part in the Energy, International, Legislative, Organizing, and the Older Workers & Retirees Committees and imparted our perspective into the proceedings. Among other things, Rexha spoke about the importance of maritime labor in the emerging offshore wind industry. He explained that while labor standards have been applied for the initial construction phase, more work needs to be done by the Biden Administration to coordinate efforts with maritime labor and wind developers to promote U.S. shipbuilding and workforce training and development for American mariners as these projects enter the operations and maintenance phase. It is imperative the AFL-CIO ensures that all maritime, operation and maintenance employment opportunities are filled with US union workers.

Yesterday, the AFL-CIO Executive Council voted to welcome a new affiliate to the Federation - the Women's National Basketball Players Association (WNBPA). The WNBPA, in its 25th year, represents all the players in the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). The affiliation provides women basketball players with a stronger voice and support system in their efforts to secure better wages, benefits, and working conditions.

SI FERRY SHOP STEWARDS ELECTED

Members sailing in the Staten Island Ferry bargaining unit elected two bargaining unit members to represent them as Shop Stewards for the next four years. Almost 80% of the M.E.B.A. Staten Island Ferry fleet members cast their votes in the two-week online election. Elected to the Deck Officer Shop Steward position was member Kenny Smith. Returning as the Engineering Officer Shop Steward is Chris DeFonce. Congratulations! Now get to work!

The M.E.B.A. continues efforts to win a fair contract for Staten Island Ferry workers. The crews haven't had a pay increase in 12 years and are being offered below-market compensation by management.

USA MARITIME CALLS FOR MARAD ISSUANCE OF CARGO PREFERENCE REGS

In a recent letter addressed to U.S. Maritime Administrator Rear Admiral Ann Phillips, the USA Maritime coalition, which includes the M.E.B.A., urged MarAd to finalize regulations to implement and enforce the nation's cargo preference laws. The letter follows enactment of the recent National Defense Authorization Act, signed into law last December directing MarAd to issue, within 270 days, a final rule covering the implementation and enforcement of the cargo preference requirements.

The newly enacted provision makes clear that MarAd has the authority and responsibility to ensure full compliance with the Ship American cargo preference programs. In a recent report published by the non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO), the report identifies numerous recommendations in order to enhance and improve cargo preference oversight, one of which includes that the "Administrator of MarAd should take steps to develop regulations to oversee and enforce compliance with cargo preference requirements. These steps should include evaluating options for overcoming challenges to developing such regulations, such as: (1) using a negotiated rulemaking as a means to address challenges achieving consensus on how to implement cargo preference requirements, and (2) developing and communicating a legislative proposal to address statutory challenges MarAd has identified."

The coalition letter states, "Failure by the government to fully enforce the cargo preference laws of the United States will only benefit foreign-flag shipping companies, to the detriment of U.S.-flag vessel operators, the American Merchant Marine, our nation's economic and supply chain security, and national sealift readiness capabilities that are required by the Department of Defense to deploy and sustain our warfighters." The letter has been posted on the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) on the homepage.

TTD: RAIL UNIONS CALL FOR UNIVERSAL PAID SICK LEAVE

As the nation commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), U.S. rail labor unions unanimously adopted a resolution calling for paid sick leave. "The lack of paid sick leave for rail workers came into the national spotlight during this last round of national contract bargaining that concluded in December," said Greg Regan, President of the AFL-CIO's

Transportation Trades Department (TTD). “A worker should not be fired for going to the doctor. Yet it is 2023 and railroaders are fighting for sick leave in the richest country on Earth.” M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents 37 unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries.

TTD said the United States is one of just six countries without a national leave policy. In November, the House of Representatives narrowly passed a measure to guarantee seven days of paid sick leave to all rail workers, by a vote of 221-207. The measure failed to garner the 60-vote threshold required to pass the Senate, failing by a vote of 52-43.

“Thirty years after the passage of the Family Medical Leave Act, the lack of paid sick leave for all railroad workers is unacceptable,” said Leo McCann, Chair of the Rail Labor Division of TTD. “All of rail labor is united and resolved to fight for paid sick leave for all rail workers through collective bargaining or voluntary agreement with the railroads.”

Last week, three major U.S. railroads announced record-breaking profits: Union Pacific made a record profit of \$7 billion in 2022; CSX and Norfolk Southern also announced record profits of \$4.17 billion and \$4.8 billion respectively in 2022. The fourth major U.S. railroad, BNSF, will report its earnings later this month. Rail corporations are raking in record profits and can afford to provide every worker with paid sick leave.

“Absent a national paid sick leave policy, the burden of securing this humane policy falls onto the shoulders of workers and the unions that represent them,” said TTD President Regan. “Rail labor is committed to pursuing and securing paid leave for workers this year to create a safer, healthier national rail system for all.”

40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARINE ELECTRIC'S DEMISE

It was 40 years ago on Sunday, that the coal carrier SS MARINE ELECTRIC capsized and sank in heavy weather off Chincoteague, Virginia in the early morning hours of February 12, 1983. 31 crewmembers perished including six M.E.B.A. engineers. M.E.B.A. lost Chief Engineer Richard Powers, 1st A/E Michael Price, 2nd A/E Howard Scott, 3rd A/E Steve Browning, 3rd A/E Charles Giddens and M.E.B.A. Calhoun School Cadet George Wickboldt. They all went down with the ship. Most of the remaining crew pitched into the sea were unable to survive the near-freezing Atlantic waters that claimed them before a Coast Guard helicopter arrived on the scene 90 minutes later. Only three crewmembers survived: Chief Mate Robert M. Cusick Jr., Third Mate Eugene Kelly and Able Seaman Paul Dewey.

The vessel was built in 1944 as World War II T2 tanker but was converted into a bulk carrier in 1962 with a new mid-section. An investigation established that the ship was unseaworthy with serious deck plating and hatch cover issues and should never have been permitted to leave port. Author Robert Frump wrote a great book about the incident and its aftermath called *Until the Sea Shall Free Them*. It details the tragedy and talks about how M.E.B.A. President Jesse Calhoun and retired Coast Guard Capt. Dominic Calicchio helped reform the inspection process of decrepit vessels. Congress also established the Coast Guard Rescue Swimmer program and survival suits were made mandatory.

GET THE 411 FOR A WORKER-FRIENDLY VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day is a time for love and affection, and for many people, it is a time to show appreciation for their loved ones. However, not all Valentine's Day gifts are created equal. With the rise of globalization and the decline of union jobs, it can be difficult to know where to shop for gifts that align with our values. Labor 411, a national directory of labor-friendly products, has compiled a list to help shoppers show their love this Valentine's Day while supporting good jobs and fair wages.

Union-Made Chocolate - See's Candies - Valentine heart boxes with hard, soft, and nut chocolate candies (BCTGM Local 125); Jelly Belly Candy Company - Valentine's Day gift boxes, tins, packs filled with taffy, gums, jellies, and other seasonal novelties under the Jelly Belly brand (BCTGM Local 125); Hershey Foods Corp. - Valentine packaging for union-made Hershey's Kisses, Hershey's Milk Chocolate Bars, Hershey's Milk Chocolate with Almond Bars, Rolo, Hershey Nuggets, and Hershey Filled Kisses (BCTGM Local 464); Ghirardelli Chocolate Company - Valentine's Day chocolate gift, tins, boxes, and packs filled with Ghirardelli brand chocolate (BCTGM Local 125); Sconza Candy Company - Red & White & Chocolate Jordanettes, Boston Baked Beans, Yogurt Raisins, Lemoncello Almonds, Chocolate/Yogurt Fruit & Raisins (BCTGM Local 125); Frankford Candy & Chocolate - Valentine candy toys, gift baskets, tins boxes, and packs filled with heart and other Valentine day gums, jellies, hard candy, molded filled, hollow and solid chocolate under the Frankford name (BCTGM Local 6); Annabelle Candy Company - Holiday seasonal specialties and bag candy including union-made candies like Rocky Road, Abba Zaba, Look, Big Hunk, and U-No. (BCTGM Local 125). **Union-Made Champagne** - Chase-Limogere (UFW, UFCW); Chateau St. Michelle (IBT); Cooks Champagne (UFCW; Tott's Champagne (UFCW). To view more union-made products, visit the online directory at <https://labor411.org/listing-region/consumer-products/>

LINCOLN'S B-DAY CLOSES HALLS ON MONDAY

Halls will be closed on Monday, February 13 to honor the "Great Emancipator" Abraham Lincoln. [Lincoln](#) was born near Hodgenville, Kentucky on February 12, 1809 and began a dramatic and inspirational Presidency in March of 1861. The tallest-ever U.S. President (6'4"), Abraham Lincoln was a licensed bartender, lost eight elections during his 56 years, practiced law without a degree and invented a [device to free steamboats stuck on sandbars](#). Honest Abe also briefly worked as a ferry operator and flatboat pilot, was beaten only once in 300 wrestling matches and frequently allowed his cat to eat on the table at the White House. The night before his assassination in 1865, Lincoln had a dream he was on a ship "sailing toward a dark and indefinite shore." Walt Whitman used that imagery when he wrote the famous poem "O Captain! My Captain!" about the death of our 16th President.

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

Friday, February 10 – Honolulu@1100.

Monday, March 6 – Boston@1200; [Seattle \(Fife\)@1300](mailto:Seattle(Fife)@1300).

Tuesday, March 7 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

Wednesday, March 8 – Jacksonville@1300; [New Orleans@1315](mailto:NewOrleans@1315); **Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thurs. March 9 – [L.A. \(San Pedro\)@1230](mailto:L.A.(SanPedro)@1230); NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, March 10 – Honolulu@1100.

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