

# 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"*  
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## **TENTATIVE AGREEMENT MAY PRESERVE PEACE ON THE DOCKS**

With a potential strike a week away, East Coast dockworkers have nailed down a tentative accord with employers that will keep peace on the docks for the next six years if rank-and-file membership ratify the agreement.

Details have not been officially released, but sources indicate that the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) reached a middle ground concerning automation, an issue that had proven a stumbling block for a new deal. Insiders say ILA successfully prevented full automation desired by the employers, but will allow USMX to adopt technologies to advance port operations without sacrificing ILA jobs. The parties will allegedly maintain a collaborative process to guide future discussions on integrating new technologies.

ILA and USMX will continue to operate under the current contract until the union can meet with its full Wage Scale Committee and complete a ratification vote.

"We are pleased to announce that ILA and USMX have reached a tentative agreement on a new six-year ILA-USMX Master Contract, subject to ratification, thus averting any work stoppage on January 15, 2025," the two sides said in a joint statement. "This agreement protects current ILA jobs and establishes a framework for implementing technologies that will create more jobs while modernizing East and Gulf coasts ports – making them safer and more efficient, and creating the capacity they need to keep our supply chains strong."

M.E.B.A. has stood in solidarity with the ILA throughout the fight for a fair contract and our members hit the pavement and joined the picketing during the three-day strike in early October that led to an initial agreement on wage increases.

The joint statement noted that, "this is a win-win agreement that creates ILA jobs, supports American consumers and businesses, and keeps the American economy the key hub of the global marketplace."

ILA President Harold Daggett credited incoming President Donald Trump for the last-minute accord and called the President-elect "one of the greatest friends of Organized Labor and champion of the working men and women of this country."

### **NEW M.E.B.A. REPRESENTATIVE IN BOSTON**

The M.E.B.A. thanks retiring Boston Representative Stuart Fay for his years of service and welcomes member Brian Flynn as the Union's new Rep. in Boston following his appointment by the District Executive Committee.

A Chief Engineer, Brian is a familiar face to members in the hall. He has regularly attended membership meetings through the years and has filled in at the hall on a temporary basis when needed. He has dispatched members through the Boston hall and helped represent the Union at various events including career fairs where he has helped recruit next-generation mariners into the M.E.B.A. fold.

Brian joined the Union as an applicant following his 2010 graduation from Massachusetts Maritime Academy. He sailed as a Chief with the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket Steamship Authority (SSA) and also has years of experience sailing deep-sea with various M.E.B.A.-contracted companies.

His start date is January 27<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations and welcome, Brian!

### **FORMER EVP WORKING TOWARD AMHS CONTRACT**

M.E.B.A.'s District Executive Committee has tapped former Executive Vice President Claudia Cimini as the new Alaska/Seattle Representative, a short-term position that will allow the Union to better shepherd upcoming talks for a new Alaska Marine Highway System contract to a successful conclusion. Claudia began working on AMHS issues in the last administration, and to maintain continuity, M.E.B.A.'s new Executive V.P. Max Alper asked her to continue focusing her efforts on this important bargaining unit.

Claudia has been part of the Union since her 1990 graduation from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and was an original crewmember of the AMHS vessel M/V KENNICOTT. Our new Representative is currently in Alaska hitting the vessels and meeting with rank-and-file in anticipation of the negotiations that begin later this month.

The AMHS contract is set to expire at the end of June. Go get 'em Claudia!

### **SEIU REJOINS AFL-CIO**

After almost 20 years, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) will rejoin the AFL-CIO, which will swell the Federation to 15 million members.

SEIU, along with several other unions, disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO in 2005 because of disagreements over organizing strategies and priorities. The union, representing two million service and care workers, announced it is coming back to the fold to join forces with the Federation to rewrite rules to strengthen the right to organize, build worker power across entire industries, and stand against attacks on workers, immigrants as well as health care employees.

"Workers know it's better in a union, and together we are stronger in our organizing and bargaining fights because there is power in unity," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. "CEOs and billionaires want nothing more than to see workers divided, but we're standing here today with greater solidarity

than ever to reach the 60 million Americans who say they'd join a union tomorrow if the laws allowed and to unrig our labor laws to guarantee every worker in America the basic right to organize on the job.”

“SEIU members are ready to unleash a new era of worker power, as millions of service and care workers unite with workers at the AFL-CIO to build our unions in every industry and every Zip code,” said SEIU International President April Verrett. “Working people have been organizing our workplaces and communities to build a stronger economy and democracy...We’re so proud to join together as nearly 15 million members to redouble our commitment to building a thriving, healthy future for working people.”

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha serves as one of the Vice Presidents on AFL-CIO’s Executive Council. He expressed his enthusiasm for SEIU’s return, emphasizing that “nothing weakens our family more than division. Welcoming them back into the house of labor further unifies us and empowers our collective memberships.”

### **G&W FUND IS THERE FOR MEMBERS AFFECTED BY WILDFIRES**

The runaway fires in the L.A. area serve as another reminder that human stability is a fragile thread, easily frayed by the relentless force of nature’s wrath and the unpredictability of unforeseen events. In the past, our Good & Welfare Fund has been there for M.E.B.A. families following devastating storms and disasters, illness and death.

The G&W is a wonderful cause. We need to continually replenish the fund to allow additional assistance to members and retirees in times of hardship. The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that the Fund is exempt from Federal Income tax. Contact a Union hall to see how you can help.

In addition, you can support the Fund on the M.E.B.A.’s Member Payment and Update Portal (PUP) that is also used to pay dues and service charges as well as contribute to the Political Action Fund. Visit [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org) to access the portal where you can also view and update your M.E.B.A. records, including contact information, credentials, and sea time. When paying dues or service charges, the site enables online payers to choose their preferred Union hall, ensuring that payments are correctly indexed and correlated for record-keeping purposes. You’ll find the online Portal to be the most efficient and advantageous manner to remain in good standing and extend a needed monetary infusion to vital Union programs.

Please consider making a contribution today to allow the Good & Welfare Fund to lend a hand to M.E.B.A. families now and into the future. Because of the Fund, M.E.B.A. stands ready to assist our affected members in the L.A. area. If you or one of our brothers or sisters need a helping hand from the Fund during hard times, you should contact your local M.E.B.A. hall.

### **PROTECT YOUR PET & YOUR WALLET WITH UNION PLUS PET INSURANCE**

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 Union Plus programs ranging from life insurance to financing children’s educations.

One of those programs is Union Plus Pet Insurance, which will reimburse you up to 90% on eligible veterinary bills. You can choose between three types of plans with flexible coverage options and enjoy a user-friendly claim submission process and access to the 24/7 Pet Helpline.

Click [here](#) to take advantage of pet health insurance on the Union Plus website.

Sarah Lewerenz, a retired AFSCME member, is a loving dog owner. Lewerenz made sure her new dog Mila was covered by pet insurance.

“Obviously I went with [the Union Plus program] Pets Best because they were so great with [my late dog] Jasmine,” Lewerenz said. Jasmine was on three medications when she passed away at age 13. “None of them were cheap,” Lewerenz said. “And [Pets Best] paid for them, no problem. I’m just happy they were so easy to deal with.” When it comes to Mila, Lewerenz reasoned, “If anything happens, it’s a heck of a lot easier to have pet insurance.”

Adriana Picasso, a Machinists (IAM) member, insures their two cats through the Union Plus Pet Insurance Program. “Mason had a kidney stone, and they had to do surgery,” Picasso said. “We were so glad we had the protection for him.”

Visit [www.unionplus.org/pets](http://www.unionplus.org/pets) to explore the plan that’s right for you and your pet. For all terms visit <http://www.petsbest.com>. Products, schedules, discounts, and rates may vary and are subject to change. More information is available at checkout.

### **APPLY FOR UNION PLUS SCHOLARSHIPS**

M.E.B.A. families have until January 31, 2025 to apply for college education assistance money through Union Plus. Union Plus is doling out one-time cash awards of \$500 to \$4,000 for study beginning in the Fall of 2025.

Visit [www.unionplus.org/scholarship](http://www.unionplus.org/scholarship) for details. 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 Friday, January 31, 2025, at noon (EST). Applications arriving after the deadline will not be considered. The award date is May 31, 2025. During the first week of June 2025, award recipients will be notified.

Current and retired members of unions participating in any Union Plus program, their spouses and their dependent children (as defined by IRS regulations) are eligible. Grandchildren are not eligible unless a legal dependent (as defined by IRS regulations).

At least one year of continuous union membership by the applicant, applicant's spouse or parent (if applicant is a dependent). The one-year membership minimum must be satisfied by May 31, 2026. Members of participating unions from the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands and Canada are eligible. The applicant must be accepted into a U.S. accredited college, university, community

college, technical or trade school at the time awards are issued. Awards must be used for the 2025 - 2026 school year. Undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to apply.

Get the official application and all the details including eligibility criteria by visiting [unionplus.org/scholarship](http://unionplus.org/scholarship)

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

Friday, January 10 – Honolulu@1100

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

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

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

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

Friday, February 7 – Honolulu@1100

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***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](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). Website: [www.mebaunion.org](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.mebaschool.org). M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or [www.mebaplans.org](http://www.mebaplans.org)*