

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*  
**M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**  
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## **MSC DISCUSSES MANNING REDUCTION AT ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

Rear Admiral Philip Sobeck commanding officer of the Military Sealift Command held a virtual media roundtable this week to elaborate on MSC's plan to put some of their ships into extended maintenance over the next two years while reducing manpower and reallocating some crews to higher-priority vessels.

MSC oversees a fleet of 140 logistics and support ships, including fleet oilers and ammunition carriers, staffed by approximately 5,500 civilian mariners and 1,500 contracted mariners. These civilian crews provide essential support to Navy warships across the globe.

Rear Admiral Philip Sobeck announced that up to 17 ships could either enter extended maintenance or be retired by 2026. He said selected platforms will include T-AO, T-AKE, ESB, and T-EPF. The mariner force from those ships will be reassigned to "higher priority" vessels.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro said, "this initiative is designed to address the logistical hurdles we're currently facing while also setting up MSC to better recruit and retain future generations of mariners."

The decision comes amid a significant shortage of civilian mariners, which Sobeck described as a national issue affecting both the Navy and the commercial shipping industry. "We're facing a critical shortfall in qualified mariners, which directly impacts our ability to expand the Combat Logistics fleet and maintain readiness," he explained. "Commercial shipping offers more competitive conditions, and we're struggling to keep pace."

Challenges for MSC mariners include delayed crew rotations, extended deployments, and pay limitations. By consolidating crews onto higher-priority ships, the Navy hopes to stabilize schedules and reduce the strain on its workforce.

Rear Adm. Sobeck noted that, "This initiative is part of a larger effort to reform the way we manage our CivMar workforce, including efforts to provide timely reliefs and restore predictability to assignments and rotations. Our initiative is expected to improve the quality of our four-month on/two-month off CivMar rotation, restore crew cohesion, and help us become a healthier fleet

overall. With our planned approach, we believe we are addressing the issues that are causing mariners to leave MSC, which unfortunately also prevent others from joining.”

The M.E.B.A. applauds MSC’s focus on increasing mariner quality of life. Seagoing work must be attractive enough to get people to walk up their first gangway, and more importantly, attractive enough to get people to want to keep going out to sea.

### **TEAMSTERS-SUPPORTED MODERATE CONGRESSWOMAN NAMED AS NEXT LABOR SECRETARY**

President-elect Donald Trump has chosen former Representative Lori Chavez-DeRemer, a moderate Republican from Oregon, to lead the Department of Labor in his upcoming administration. Chavez-DeRemer, who recently lost her House seat in a closely contested race, has been recognized for her efforts to bridge the gap between business and labor groups in supporting American workers. M.E.B.A. has a good working relationship with Chavez-DeRemer and we supported her Congressional campaign.

Throughout her campaigns, Chavez-DeRemer received significant union support including from M.E.B.A. In addition, Teamsters President Sean O’Brien, who spoke at the 2024 Republican National Convention, expressed optimism about her appointment, viewing it as a positive step toward fostering more union jobs. Chavez-DeRemer, whose father was a Teamster, has often highlighted her commitment to labor issues, as well as her work on public safety and the opioid crisis.

As labor secretary, Chavez-DeRemer will likely navigate contentious territory, including potential rollbacks of worker protections implemented during the Biden administration. These measures include expanded overtime rules and protections for gig economy workers. Trump’s administration is expected to take a different approach, potentially loosening regulations while prioritizing stricter enforcement of laws around child labor and employee classifications. The department may also see changes in its policies on immigrant labor and workplace safety.

During her time in Congress, Chavez-DeRemer established a strong pro-labor record in Congress by securing herself as one of the few Republicans to cosponsor the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, which would significantly reform our nation’s outdated labor laws. In addition, she signed onto a bipartisan letter supporting robust funding for the Maritime Security Program for the upcoming 2025 Fiscal Year. Chavez-DeRemer joins the ranks of established labor-friendly, moderate Republicans such as Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Don Bacon (R-NE), David Joyce (R-OH) and Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), among others.

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer and PAF Chairman Roland Rexha said, “We are pleased with the nomination of Congresswoman Lori Chavez-DeRemer, to serve as the next Secretary of Labor. In just her first term of Congress, she has proven herself to be a strong champion of union workers and the maritime industry. As a member of the Republican Main Street Partnership and House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, DeRemer has been a sensible voice in Congress supporting a common-sense pro-worker agenda. M.E.B.A. looks forward to supporting her nomination and urge the Senate to swiftly confirm her appointment.”

### **M.E.B.A. ELECTION: BALLOTS TO BE TABULATED ON MONDAY**

The 2024 M.E.B.A. District election reaches its conclusion on Monday (12/2) as three months of ballots accumulating at a secure depository will be collected and tabulated. An Impartial Administrator will perform the count overseen by a five-person rank-and-file M.E.B.A. Tallying Committee. The Administrator and the Committee will each file reports within 24 hours of the completion of the count.

In accordance with the M.E.B.A. By-Laws, members should have returned their ballots to the depository by November 30. As stated in the By-Laws, ballots not received in the depository when the ballots are collected on December 2, shall be disqualified and not counted. Ballots were mailed out to the membership by September 1. TrueBallot, Inc. along with the Tallying Committee, will retrieve the ballots then proceed to 400-444 North Capitol Street, N.W. Washington D.C. in Suite 383/385, where the ballots will be counted. Interested members in good standing are welcome to attend as observers.

### **M.E.B.A. ELECTION: ELECTED TALLYING COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE MONDAY'S BALLOT COUNT**

On Monday, November 25th, Union halls elected rank-and-file members to serve as the Tallying Committee for the M.E.B.A. District election ballot tabulation. Elected were Steve Walker (Seattle), Reggie Abrams (Houston), Kieran Youngberg (NY/NJ), Keith Martin (Norfolk) and John Schaeffer (Tampa). The Oakland hall did not have a quorum at their meeting and will not send a member.

Tallying Committee members will meet in Washington D.C. on December 2<sup>nd</sup> to oversee the tabulation of the ballots. In accordance with the By-Laws, the Tallying Committee will issue its report within 24 hours of the completion of the vote count.

### **COAST GUARD DIRECTIVE ON CHINESE CRANES**

The U.S. Coast Guard has introduced a fresh cybersecurity mandate aimed at mitigating potential threats posed by ship-to-shore cranes manufactured by Chinese firms, responding to growing worries about the security of the nation's maritime infrastructure.

Under the newly released Maritime Security (MARSEC) Directive 105-5, enhanced cyber risk management protocols will now apply specifically to cranes originating from Chinese manufacturers. This directive expands on the security framework first introduced in February 2024, signaling a heightened focus on safeguarding critical port operations from cyber vulnerabilities.

### **TRUSTEES FINALIZE PLAN TO MERGE CAL MARITIME WITH CAL POLY**

The proposed "integration" of the California State University Maritime Academy (Cal Maritime) with California Polytechnic State University has been approved by CSU Trustees and the merge will begin next year.

Cal Maritime is one of six state maritime academies in the U.S. and the sole academy on the West Coast. Growing financial challenges and enrollment declines have undermined its viability as a standalone institution, prompting the move.

Effective July 1, 2025, the two universities will begin operating as a single institution: Cal Poly. Cal Maritime will retain its maritime focus within Cal Poly, with the integration of operations, resources

and governance structure. CMA's specialized degree programs, three of which lead to a Merchant Marine license, will continue to be offered at the Vallejo campus. Cal Maritime's students will become part of the Cal Poly student body and gain access to a broad range of academic facilities and student services.

Full integration of academics will be completed by the beginning of the Fall 2026 semester. All degree options and services will be provided by Cal Poly, and all Cal Poly Maritime Academy and Cal Poly, Solano Campus students will be enrolled as Cal Poly students.

### **UPCOMING M.E.B.A. HOLIDAY PARTIES**

December 2 – **M.E.B.A. Boston** - After the membership meeting at the hall.

December 3 – **M.E.B.A. Charleston** – 4-6 pm at Holy City Brewing, 1021 Aragon Ave.

December 4 – **M.E.B.A. New Orleans** – After the membership meeting at the hall.

December 5 - **M.E.B.A. Los Angeles** 2-4 pm - at Big Nick's Pizza, 1110 North Gaffey Street.

December 5 - **M.E.B.A. New York/New Jersey** - After the membership meeting at the hall.

December 5 - **M.E.B.A. Norfolk** - After the membership meeting at the hall.

December 5 - **M.E.B.A. Tampa** – 3-6 pm - at Gaspar's Grotto, 1805 E 7th Avenue.

December 6 - **M.E.B.A. Oakland** - 12:30-3:30 pm at the hall.

December 11 – **M.E.B.A. Baltimore** - 12-5 pm at the hall.

December 12 - **M.E.B.A. Headquarters & the American Maritime Congress** – Beginning at 5:30 on the HQ Rooftop.

December 13 - **M.E.B.A. Jacksonville** – 2-5 pm – at Pat's Lounge, 4870 Highway Avenue.

December 13 - **M.E.B.A. Seattle** – 12:30 – at the hall.

December 16 - **M.E.B.A. Honolulu** - 10 am–2 pm - at the hall.

December 19 – **M.E.B.A. Houston** – 4-7 pm - at the new hall (6604 South Loop E.)

### **VACATION BENEFITS – 2024 YEAR-END CLOSING**

Apply for Vacation and Port Relief Benefits early to avoid the year-end rush.

- **FILING DEADLINE:** The deadline for issuing checks dated in 2024 in the Outports and the Plan Office is Tuesday, December 17, 2024.
- **DIRECT DEPOSIT:** The final Direct Deposit Transfer for 2024 will be made on 12/18/2024 and the funds will be deposited into bank accounts on 12/20/2024.
- Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/17/24 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/2/2025.

Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2024 must file before this deadline. Remember, Wednesday, December 25, 2024 and Wednesday, January 1, 2025 are holidays and the Outports and the Plan Office will be closed. It is always wise to plan ahead, so you should verify the specific holiday schedule with the Plan Office Representative.

### **Split Your Vacation Payments between 2024 and 2025**

You can submit an Application for Vacation Pay prior to the end of the year and request that the payment of your vacation benefits be split. Two checks will be issued to you, one in 2024 and a second in 2025. The 12/17/2024 deadline applies to split claims also. The vacation benefits paid in

this manner MUST be a continuous vacation period. Please contact the Vacation Plan staff in Baltimore at 800-811-6322 or 410-547-9111 if you have any questions.

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

Monday, December 2 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, December 3 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, December 4 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org)**

Thursday, December 5 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300** (Tampa meeting to be held at Coppertail Brewing Company - 2601 E 2nd Ave, Tampa, FL)

Friday, December 6 – **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](mailto:mebahq@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 Calhoon 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)*