

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*  
**M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**  
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## **UNCERTAINTY AS GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN LOOMS**

Congressional dysfunction continued as the nation hurtles toward its fourth partial government shutdown in the last decade, as the federal agencies run out of money at the end of the fiscal year on Sunday. M.E.B.A. represents Government fleet mariners in the Military Sealift Command, Army Corps of Engineers and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Hundreds of thousands of furloughs are expected if Congress can't reach a last second deal on a spending package and many others would have to work without pay until funding is passed. The last Government shutdown took place in late 2018 and stretched into the New Year before it was resolved. That 35-day stoppage was the longest of the 21 federal shutdowns in the last five decades – most lasted less than a week.

If there is a lengthy shutdown, it could potentially disrupt stipend payments for important programs affecting our industry such as the Maritime Security Program and the Tanker Security Program.

During the 35-day stoppage, the National Maritime Center (NMC) was hard-hit by the lapse in appropriations and subsequent furloughs that disrupted the fluid processing of shipping document applications. NMC provided temporary relief to seafarers for Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC) and Medical Certificates that time, by issuing extensions. About 42,000 active-duty Coast Guardsmen along with around 1,300 agency civilians continued working without a paycheck while another 7,400 Coast Guard civilians were furloughed.

Federal workers represented by M.E.B.A. affiliate Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS) would also feel the brunt of a shutdown. PASS represents more than 11,000 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Defense Department workers throughout the air traffic control system.

The Transportation Trades Department (AFL-CIO) noted that during the 2018-19 shutdown, "Over 10,400 fully certified air traffic controllers worked without pay, including mandatory 6-day workweeks and 10-hour days, and more than 4,000 FAA technicians, and over 45,000 Transportation Security Officers worked unpaid as well. The crisis caused thousands of security officers to take unscheduled leave or quit their jobs, which resulted in understaffing at busy TSA airport security checkpoints. After the dust settled, business leaders and union leaders alike agreed that the shutdown was unnecessary and detrimental to the aviation industry. Every day the

government was shut down, a layer of safety was removed from the nation's air traffic control system.”

### **MEETING WITH OSG, PUSHING AHEAD WITH REPRESENTATION ELECTION**

At press time, M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac and our Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith were meeting with principals at our contracted company OSG about vessel crewing and other issues. Prior to the meeting, GCVP Smith visited the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in Tampa, FL and dropped off signed pledge cards showing majority support for the M.E.B.A. to serve as the collective bargaining representative for the (currently) non-union deck officers in the U.S.-flag OSG tanker fleet. The Engine Officers in that fleet are already represented by the M.E.B.A. The pledge cards are necessary to petition the NLRB to hold a secret ballot election.

M.E.B.A. has a lot to offer the OSG Deck Officers with the best contracts in the maritime industry - the highest paying jobs, most protective work rules and best benefits. The organizing push was prompted by many of the OSG Deck Officers themselves who approached the Union in the interests of seeking collective bargaining rights with the M.E.B.A. The Union has a long history with OSG dating back half a century.

Recently, the NLRB approved a Representation Election for the Deck Officers serving on the three Alaska Tanker Company vessels. That election began on September 19 and will conclude on Jan. 18, 2024 with an NLRB ballot count.

### **EMPOWERING WOMEN IN TRANSPORTATION: ITF ISSUES GLOBAL SURVEY RESULTS**

In a resounding call for equality and representation in the world of transportation, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) published a report underscoring the urgent need for women's voices to be at the forefront of decision-making processes in the global transportation sector. “What Women Want from Transport” catalogs the results of a poll conducted last year in 15 countries including the United States.

The survey findings shed light on the pivotal role that transportation plays in the lives of women worldwide. Key concerns for women in transportation include safety and affordability and highlighting the need for more inclusive and comprehensive policies in the sector. Moreover, women have expressed strong support for unions operating within the transportation industry, demonstrating a collective desire for change.

A staggering 72% of women surveyed believe that public transport should be funded by government initiatives, emphasizing the role of public investment in ensuring accessible and safe transportation options for all. Furthermore, 77% of women recognize that transportation plays a crucial role in reducing economic inequality, highlighting the profound impact that equitable mobility can have on society as a whole.

Ensuring a safe working environment for transport workers stands out as a top priority for women, sending a clear signal to governments and investors alike. The report emphasizes that it is imperative for them to heed the demands of female voters and workers and take meaningful action to guarantee a secure and supportive work environment.

An overwhelming 88% of women are calling on their governments to invest in protecting transport workers from violence and harassment while a remarkable 86% demand improvements in health and safety laws to safeguard the well-being of transportation employees. These figures reflect a strong and unwavering commitment to ensuring the welfare of those who keep the world moving.

See [www.itfglobal.org/sites/default/files/node/resources/files/ITF\\_Women-Poll-Report\\_web.pdf](http://www.itfglobal.org/sites/default/files/node/resources/files/ITF_Women-Poll-Report_web.pdf) to read the report.

### **PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT FOR STRIKING UAW WORKERS**

President Biden became the first sitting U.S. Commander-in-Chief to join a picket line this week when he stood shoulder to shoulder with striking United Auto Workers members outside a General Motors distribution center near Detroit, Michigan. Using a bullhorn, he urged them to “stick with it” and persevere during the ongoing strike, emphasizing that auto workers deserve a substantial pay raise and additional benefits.

He acknowledged the pivotal role the UAW played in rescuing the auto industry in 2008, highlighting the sacrifices and dedication of its members during challenging times. “The fact of the matter is that you guys, the UAW — you saved the automobile industry back in 2008 and before,” Biden noted. “You made a lot of sacrifices. You gave up a lot. And the companies were in trouble. But now they’re doing incredibly well. And guess what? You should be doing incredibly well too. It’s a simple proposition.”

“Wall Street didn’t build the country,” he continued. “The middle class built the country, and unions built the middle class. And that’s a fact. So, let’s keep going... You deserve what you’ve earned, and you’ve earned a hell of a lot more than you’re getting paid now.”

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said “Working people know [the President] has our backs every day and that he understands that UAW members’ fight for a fair contract is deeply connected to the struggle over the soul of our country. We stand with President Biden, the UAW and workers across the country who are sick and tired of getting the short end of the stick. Together, we’re organized to fight back against the corporate CEOs who have rigged the system against working people for far too long.”

Although the parties acknowledge that some progress has been made in negotiations, the sides maintain there are still significant differences. The UAW is steadfastly pursuing hefty wage hikes over a four-year period. Other key demands from the UAW include 40% hourly pay increases, a reduction in the workweek to 32 hours, a return to traditional pensions, the elimination of compensation tiers, and the restoration of cost-of-living adjustments, among various other items on the negotiation table.

### **UN: LACK OF CLARITY FOR SHIPPING DECARBONIZATION INHIBITING FLEET PLANNING**

In its newly released “Review of Maritime Transport 2023,” the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) highlighted the pressing need for cleaner fuels, digital solutions and an equitable transition to combat continued carbon emissions and regulatory uncertainty in the shipping industry.

The UN institution reported that shipowners continue to face challenges of renewing their fleets without the clarity of a definitive plan on alternative fuels, green technology and regulatory regimes to guide them. They note that port terminals face similar challenges in vital investment decisions.

UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan said, “Maritime transport needs to decarbonize as soon as possible, while ensuring economic growth. Balancing environmental sustainability, regulatory compliance and economic demands is vital for a prosperous, equitable and resilient future for maritime transport.”

The agency underscored the importance of system-wide collaboration, swift regulatory interventions, and robust investments in green technologies and fleets. While the transition to cleaner fuels is in its early stages, with nearly 99% of the global fleet still reliant on conventional fuels, the report cited promising developments, including 21% of vessels on order designed for alternative fuels.

However, the transition comes with substantial costs. UNCTAD reported that an additional \$8 billion to \$28 billion will be required annually to decarbonize ships by 2050, and even more substantial investments, ranging from \$28 billion to \$90 billion annually, will be needed to develop infrastructure for 100% carbon-neutral fuels by 2050.

They said full decarbonization could elevate annual fuel expenses by 70% to 100%. To ensure an equitable transition, UNCTAD called for a universal regulatory framework applicable to all ships, irrespective of their registration flags, ownership or operational areas, thereby avoiding a two-speed decarbonization process and maintaining a level playing field.

### **CHECK YOUR MMC FOR STCW III/2**

As a reminder, members should make sure they are not missing the STCW III/2 endorsement on “management level” Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC). The endorsement is required for these billets on ships sailing internationally:

- Chief Engineer
- Captain
- 1st Assistant Engineer
- Chief Mate

The endorsement is obtained after successful completion of required courses and submission of documentation to the National Maritime Center. Chief Engineers and 1st A/Es require Engine Room Resource Management (ERM), Management of Electrical and Electronic Control Equipment (MEECE), and Leadership & Management. Check the National Maritime Center (CG-NMC) Home Page ([uscg.mil](https://www.uscg.mil)) for deck officer requirements and more information - [https://www.dco.uscg.mil/national\\_maritime\\_center](https://www.dco.uscg.mil/national_maritime_center)

If you believe you should have the endorsement but it is missing from your license and you have queries, please contact the Norfolk Hall at (757) 440-1820. If you are in the process of renewing or upgrading, make sure STCW III/2 is included in your MMC.

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

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

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

Wednesday, October 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, October 5 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, October 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.*