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"

Number 43 – October 22, 2026

In this issue – Winge Makes Case for Fair Pay, Reliable Service at WSF//Rep. Carbajal Raises Questions over Jones Act Waiver Oversight//Contact Your Lawmakers about the Jones Act//Port Engineer Opportunity in Charleston//Push to Get Dark Fleet Tankers to Sail Legit//Toys for Tots in Tampa//Space in CMES Wartsila Class//

M.E.B.A. REP. MAKES CASE FOR FAIR PAY, RELIABLE FERRY SERVICE AT WSF

In the wake of the Washington State Ferries' Oct. 5 service disruptions, when insufficient mariner availability forced widespread sailing cancellations, M.E.B.A. WSF Representative Eric Winge used the pages of the *Seattle Times* to make the case for the marine engineers whose work keeps the ferry system running. In his excellent Oct. 20 op-ed, Winge challenged claims that engine room crews are overpaid, pointing to a substantial wage gap with both deck officers and other maritime engineers, chronic understaffing and punishing overtime demands. The message is clear: fair, competitive wages are essential to retaining qualified engineers, recruiting the next generation of mariners and ensuring the reliable ferry service Washington communities depend on.

Winge also highlighted the personal toll of a system that relies on excessive overtime to compensate for a shortage of relief engineers, citing a workforce survey showing that more than 60% of WSF marine engineers are considering retirement or leaving for other jobs. With Washington investing billions in a new hybrid-electric fleet, he argued that the state must invest in the skilled workforce needed to operate and maintain those vessels.

While recent steps by Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson offer reason for optimism, Winge emphasized that closing the wage gap is critical to building a stronger, more sustainable workforce and restoring reliable service for the communities WSF serves.

The qualifications required of marine engineers underscore the importance of retaining experienced personnel. Winge pointed out that earning an entry-level third assistant engineer's license requires 1,080 days of sea service, with another 720 days needed to qualify for a chief engineer's license, in addition to extensive training and rigorous examinations. These are highly skilled maritime professionals entrusted with vessel operations, maintenance and emergency response — responsibilities that demand appropriate compensation and recognition.

The consequences of failing to address the workforce crisis extend beyond the engine room. WSF engineers worked more than 100,000 hours of overtime last year, a reliance on extra shifts that drives up costs while contributing to exhaustion and declining morale. As Winge noted, when staffing is so tight that even a few engineers are unavailable or decline additional overtime, vessels can be forced out of service. His editorial reinforces M.E.B.A.'s position that competitive wages and adequate

staffing are not simply labor issues; they are fundamental to safe, dependable ferry operations and the long-term strength of Washington's maritime workforce.

REP. CARBAJAL SEEKS ANSWERS ON JONES ACT WAIVER OVERSIGHT

The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee's Ranking Member is pressing the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for answers about its oversight of ongoing Jones Act waivers. Foreign-flag shipping interests have enjoyed profiting at the expense of the U.S. Merchant Marine since March 17th when the waiver was put in place. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA) is voicing concerns that foreign-flagged vessels operating in U.S. domestic commerce may be violating federal requirements while they take advantage of the waiver. *Telex Times* readers will note that this has been an ongoing concern of U.S.-flag shipping interests as we look forward to the planned expiration of the Jones Act waiver in mid-November.

In an Oct. 16 letter to DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin, Rep. Carbajal cited reports that foreign-flagged vessels transported more than $40 million in petroleum products between U.S. ports without required disclosures. More than 25 domestic voyages have reportedly been completed under the current waiver, with some vessels making multiple trips.

While national-defense waiver authority permits certain Jones Act restrictions to be suspended under specific circumstances, Rep. Carbajal emphasized that it does not exempt foreign operators or crewmembers from other applicable federal laws. He asked DHS to explain how it is ensuring compliance with federal tax obligations, immigration rules, vessel safety, environmental protections, labor laws and other requirements. He cited IRS guidance establishing that income that foreign corporations earn from domestic voyages under a waiver is generally domestic-source income and does not qualify for the international shipping income exclusion under Section 883 of the Internal Revenue Code or related treaty benefits.

He also questioned whether foreign crewmembers admitted under D-status visas are legally authorized to serve on domestic voyages and requested details on enforcement actions and coordination among DHS, the Coast Guard, Treasury, the IRS and other federal agencies.

The administration has authorized the waiver for an aggregate period of approximately 250 days, Carbajal noted, underscoring the need for continued oversight. "Congress has a responsibility to ensure that a national-defense waiver is not being treated as a broader exemption from federal law," he wrote.

Carbajal requested a response by Oct. 31. The inquiry highlights concerns that prolonged waivers without effective enforcement give foreign operators a competitive advantage over U.S.-flag companies and American mariners, while undermining the Jones Act's role in sustaining domestic maritime capacity.

USE YOUR VOICE: OPPOSE AN EXTENSION OF THE JONES ACT WAIVER

The fight to protect the U.S. maritime industry is not over. With the current Jones Act waiver scheduled to expire Nov. 15, the threat of another extension remains — even as the waiver has failed to deliver on its promise of lower fuel prices. Congress must oppose any further extension of this politically driven waiver, which undermines the U.S.-flag fleet and the American mariners who sustain our nation's maritime capacity.

Email your members of Congress using this link and urge them to "Stop the Political Jones Act Waiver!" You can also contact your senators with this link and demand that they oppose any further extension. Protecting American maritime jobs, our U.S.-flag fleet and the Jones Act requires action. Contact your lawmakers today.

PORT ENGINEER OPPORTUNITY WITH CHARLESTON MARINE

Charleston Industrial and Marine Repair, LLC, is seeking a hands-on engineer to manage vessel repair and industrial projects in Charleston, South Carolina. The company is hiring at either the Assistant Port Engineer or Port Engineer level, depending on experience, and encourages licensed marine engineers interested in transitioning ashore to apply.

Key qualifications include marine engineering experience, a hands-on approach to vessel repair, and the ability to manage industrial projects.

The full-time position, with full M.E.B.A. benefits, is based primarily in Charleston, with occasional travel possible. The schedule is five days a week, eight hours per day, with work conducted out of the company's Charleston workshop.

Licensed engineers ready to take their experience ashore are encouraged to apply. Contact David Willison at david@charlestonmarinerepair.org or call (843) 696-9057 to discuss the opportunity and application process.

U.S. COULD LET SANCTIONED TANKERS GO LEGIT

Energy Secretary Chris Wright announced a plan to bring sanctioned "dark fleet" tankers into legitimate oil transportation in an effort to ease a global shipping shortage and reduce energy prices. Secretary Wright said the government is working with investors willing to purchase and refurbish sanctioned vessels before returning them to service carrying legally traded oil.

The administration would establish an approval process to remove their sanctioned status, potentially adding dozens or even hundreds of tankers to the legitimate fleet.

The initiative comes as the conflict involving Iran has disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, driven up tanker rates and increased fuel costs. However, analysts question how much relief the plan will provide, noting that heightened security risks and soaring war-risk insurance premiums remain major obstacles.

The age and condition of many dark fleet vessels also raise concerns about their suitability for mainstream trade. Analysts estimate that only a fraction of currently sanctioned tankers may qualify to return to legitimate service, even after accounting for ownership restrictions and the cost of refurbishment.

M.E.B.A. TAMPA HALL COLLECTING TOYS FOR TOTS DONATIONS

As the Christmas season gets underway, M.E.B.A.'s Tampa Union Hall is helping bring holiday cheer to children in need by serving as a drop-off location for the Marine Corps' Toys for Tots program. Members, their families and the local maritime community are encouraged to participate by donating new, unwrapped toys by the deadline, Wednesday, Dec. 2.

The Toys for Tots program collects and distributes toys to less fortunate children, helping ensure they have a gift to open on Christmas morning. Donations are collected locally and distributed through community organizations to families who might otherwise struggle to provide holiday gifts. Every contribution can help make the season brighter for a child. Donations can be dropped off at the M.E.B.A. Tampa Union Hall, located at 2018 East 7th Ave., Tampa, FL 33605.

For questions or additional information, contact Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway at **ngreenway@mebaunion.org** or call the hall at 813-247-7223 for Nicole or Dispatcher Robinson Thelismond.

ADDITIONAL SPACE IN UPCOMING WARTSILA COURSES
The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that it has additional space available in the following courses:

- Wartsila Flex Basic – October 28 – 30 (Wed. – Fri.)
- Wartsila Flex Operator – November 2 - 6

Applications can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org) or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*
Monday, November 2 – **Boston**@1200; **Seattle (Fife)**@1300.
Tuesday, November 3 – **CMES**@1430; **Charleston**@1400; **Houston**@1315; **Oakland**@1230; **Portland, Maine**@1200.
Wednesday, November 4 – **Jacksonville**@1300; **New Orleans**@1315; **Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@**1300 **(No Voting) – Register by emailing** mebahq@mebaunion.org
Thursday, November 5 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@**1230; **NY/NJ@**1300; **Norfolk@**1300; **Tampa@**1300.
Friday, November 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. 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 Calhoon 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