Volume LXXXVIII No. 8 185

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Monday, August 18, 2025

# FEMA, USCIS Abruptly Strip Workers of Union Protections

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have dismantled all collective bargaining rights for their employees, effective immediately, a decision labor advocates are calling an unprecedented attack on federal workers' rights.

On Friday, August 8th union leaders at both agencies were blindsided by emails informing them that all collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) were canceled without warning. Alongside the cancellations, management revoked the use of office space and resources for union work, eliminated the practice of granting official time for union representatives, and shut down the grievance and arbitration systems that have served as workers' primary recourse against unfair treatment.

Union representatives, some of whom have spent decades negotiating on behalf of their colleagues, have been ordered to return to full-time operational duties, leaving no dedicated advocates to challenge management decisions.

USCIS spokesperson Matthew Tragesser defended the move in sharp terms. "Protecting national security, public safety and the sanctity of our borders is the agency's top priority, union management diverts time and energy from this critical mission," Tragesser said. "Our time and energy are best spent defending the homeland, not airing grievances in air-conditioned conference rooms."

For many federal workers, this statement read less like a security-focused policy shift and more like an open dismissal of the role unions play in ensuring fair treatment and safe working conditions. "Calling it a matter of national security doesn't change what it is, union-busting," said one FEMA employee who requested anonymity out of fear of retaliation.

CBAs govern a wide range of workplace rules: scheduling, leave, discipline, performance reviews, and dispute resolution. Without them, management gains unilateral control over policies affecting thousands of employees, and workers lose guaranteed avenues to challenge unfair discipline or unsafe conditions.

For FEMA staff, the change comes in the middle of hurricane and wildfire response operations, high-stress, high-risk work where protections for rest, safety, and mental health are critical. For USCIS employees, who face heavy caseloads and intense political pressure, the loss of grievance protections means there is now no formal mechanism to address unfair workloads, discriminatory practices, or arbitrary decisions.

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) condemned the move as a direct assault on the principles of workplace democracy. "Federal unions don't just negotiate pay and benefits, they ensure workers are treated with dignity and fairness," an AFGE spokesperson said. "Eliminating these agreements silences workers and leaves them vulnerable to unchecked management abuse."

Legal experts say the abrupt can-

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# The Roots of Labor Day: Honoring America's Workers Through History

As millions of Americans prepare to enjoy the long weekend filled with barbecues, parades, and end-of-summer festivities, the true significance of Labor Day is often forgotten. More than just a seasonal marker or a shopping holiday, Labor Day is a national tribute to the contributions and sacrifices of American workers. Its origins lie in a period of great hardship and determination, when laborers across the country began to organize for better conditions and recognition.

Labor Day's story begins in the late 19th century, during the height of the Industrial Revolution. Cities were booming with factories and railroads, and workers faced grueling conditions. Many laborers, including children, worked twelve-hour days, seven days a week, often in unsafe environments and for very low wages. Workplace injuries were common, job security was virtually nonexistent, and there were few legal protections. In response, labor unions began to form, seeking to improve wages, reduce hours, and ensure safer workplaces.

The idea of a holiday to honor workers was first proposed in the early 1880s. Though there is debate over who deserves the credit, some historians point to Peter J. McGuire, cofounder of the American Federation of Labor, while others credit Matthew Maguire, a machinist from New Jersey, it is agreed that

the first Labor Day celebration took place in New York City on September 5, 1882. Organized by the Central Labor Union, the event featured a parade of over ten thousand workers who marched through the streets carrying signs calling for workers' rights. The parade was followed by picnics, music, and speeches celebrating the dignity of labor.

The event inspired other labor groups across the country, and in the following years, more cities and states began hosting their own Labor Day celebrations. In 1887, Oregon became the first state to officially recognize Labor Day as a holiday. Soon after, Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and

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# **China's Shipbuilding Titans Set to Merge**

In a move poised to reshape the global shipbuilding industry, China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC) and China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC) are in the final stages of a \$16 billion merger that will create the largest shipbuilding group in the world. When complete, the combined entity will command roughly 17% of all global shipbuilding orders, more than 530 vessels currently under construction, and generate an estimated \$18 billion in annual revenue, solidifying China's dominance in both the commercial and naval sectors. The deal, which has been in discussion for over a year, is expected to close before the end of 2025. Industry analysts say the merger is not merely an economic maneuver but also part of Beijing's broader strategy to consolidate strategic industries and strengthen China's maritime power.

CSSC and CSIC are already state-owned giants, each with sprawling operations covering shipyards, design institutes, and equipment manufacturing. Their combined resources will unite hundreds of thousands of workers across dozens of facilities, ranging from Shanghai's bustling commercial yards to Dalian's advanced naval construction sites. According to Chinese state media, the merger aims to "optimize resource allocation, eliminate redundant capacity, and accelerate innovation" in advanced ship designs, including next-generation container vessels, LNG carriers, and military ships such as aircraft carriers and destroyers.

The Chinese government has long viewed shipbuilding as a pillar of its industrial policy, recognizing its importance to global trade, maritime security, and technological self-sufficiency. By merging the two corporations, Beijing hopes to create a national champion capable of competing with, and outproducing, rivals in South Korea and Japan.

The merger will likely reverberate across the maritime industry, putting pressure on leading shipbuilders such as South Korea's Hyundai Heavy

Industries and Japan's Imabari Shipbuilding. While those companies have excelled in specialized sectors like high-end LNG carriers, China's scale advantage and state-backed financing give the new conglomerate a formidable competitive edge. "China's yards have already been securing a growing share of international orders," said Mark Hutton, a maritime economist at Lloyd's List Intelligence. "By combin ing CSSC and CSIC, they can leverage shared technology, consolidate procurement, and present a unified front to global customers." The new entity will have the capacity to deliver a wide range of vessels, from massive 24,000-TEU container ships to sophisticated warships, allowing it to serve both commercial clients and the Chinese navy.

Beyond economics, the merger carries clear geopolitical implications. China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is in the midst of an unprecedented modernization drive, commissioning advanced surface

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## **SUP Honor Roll**

Voluntary contributions from the membership to the following funds:

## **Dues-Paying Pensioners**

Diane Ferrari	BK#2251
Hannu Kurppa	BK#3162
Gunnar Lundeberg	BK#4090
Vince O'Halloran	BK#2463
James Clay	BK#4794
Mike Worth	BK#3629
Terrence Lane	BK#4107
Teofilo Rojas	BK#3194
Leo Moore	BK#6492
Duke Maringer	BK#6518

#### Organization/ General Fund

Abraham Acosta	\$20
Cody Clark	\$50
Ben Braceros	\$50
Dieg Rizan	\$50

#### **Final Departures**

William Smyth, Permit No.18005. Born in Ireland in 1939. Joined SUP in 1990. Died in Florida, June 5, 2025. (Pensioner)

## **Political Fund**

Isnin Idris\$200
Jerwin Ablan\$50
Art Garrett\$50
Anna Von Machul\$100
John Hartley\$50
Emo Aulelava\$25
Abraham Acosta\$60
Emmanuel Rezada\$20
Vern Haik\$25
Norman Kurtz\$50
Peter Winter\$200
Ron Sugui\$20
Luke Satsuma\$50
Emani Villi\$20
Vince O'Halloran\$200
Dave Hampton \$10
Erling Eastmark\$30
Martin Machado\$20
David Reinking\$50
Ben Braceros\$50
Dell Diaceius
Chase Henderson

## West Coast Sailors

ABRAHAM ACOSTA\$2	0
VERN HAIK\$2	5

# Record-Breaking July at the Ports of Los Angeles & Long Beach

In an unprecedented surge, the twin ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach shattered previous records in July, collectively handling over 1 million TEUs, marking their busiest month on record amid a flurry of trade activity spurred by tariff-driven import acceleration.

The Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach processed 1,011,809 TEUs in July 2025, surpassing the previous high of 980,450 TEUs set in May 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the nation's largest gateway, the Port of Los Angeles alone handled 544,000 TEUs, an 8% year-over-year increase, the highest volume ever recorded in a single month.

This record flood of containers was largely driven by retailers and manufacturers front-loading imports from China to beat looming tariff hikes. According to logistics firm Descartes, shipments from China rose 44% month over month, while President Trump's extension of

#### **SUP Meetings 2025**

HQ	<b>Branches</b>
September 8	September 15
October 14*	October 20
November 10	November 17
December 8	December 15
*Tuesday meeting d	ue to holiday

tariff deadlines to November prompted importers to accelerate deliveries.

Meanwhile, at the Port of Long Beach, terminal operators processed 944,232 TEUs, marking a 7% year-over-year gain and establishing it as the port's most active July ever, and the third-busiest month in its 114-year history. Imports hit 468,081 TEUs (up 7.6%), empty containers rose to 384,824 TEUs (+12.3%), while exports fell 12.9%, reflecting an import-heavy traffic mix fueled by tariff-sensitive flows.

Port leadership recognizes the historic volumes as signs of both strength and volatility. Port of Long Beach CEO Mario Cordero described the import surge as products bought at "lower costs during the temporary pause placed on tariffs," though he cautioned that volumes may taper in the second half of the year amid ongoing policy uncertainty. Likewise, Los Angeles port director Gene Seroka noted that much of the holiday inventory is already onshore, meaning that traditional import peaks from August to October may be muted.

These backloaded shipments came amidst a broader logistics environment where U.S. import volumes may have peaked, according to industry analysts, signifying a possible slowdown ahead despite the July highs.

## CALIFORNIA LABOR ENDORSES SPECIAL ELECTION

"President Trump has said that Republicans are 'entitled' to five more congressional votes in Texas. Well, they aren't entitled to steal the 2026 election.

California's unions refuse to stand by as democracy is tested. California Labor is unified in our resolve to fightback against President Trump's anti-worker agenda.

We are 2.3 million union members strong and we will use our collective power to campaign for this redistricting effort and win."

Lorena Gonzalez
President, California Federation of Labor Unions, AFL-CIO

## **Membership and Ratings Committee**

The Committee met on August 7, 2025 and found the following members eligible for advancement in seniority and rating stamps in the various departments.

Number	Seatime	Rating	Senority
B-19843	1 yr.	0.5.	В
B-19844	1 yr.	0.5.	В
B-19845	1 yr.	A.B.	В
C-3115	30 days	A.B.	С
C-3116	30 days	0.5.	С
C-3117	30 days	0.5.	C
C-3118	30 days	A.B.	С
	B-19843 B-19844 B-19845 C-3115 C-3116 C-3117	B-19843 1 yr. B-19844 1 yr. B-19845 1 yr. C-3115 30 days C-3116 30 days C-3117 30 days	B-19843 1 yr. 0.5. B-19844 1 yr. 0.5. B-19845 1 yr. A.B. C-3115 30 days A.B. C-3116 30 days 0.5. C-3117 30 days 0.5.

**Ratings: Bosun Stamp** 

Dennis Sumague Bk#7530 Dennis Solijon Bk#7543

Ratings Committee: Taufid Wasel BK# 3633, Diamond Payne BK#0459 and Andre Price BK#0552.



From left to right: Taufid Wasel BK# 3633, Diamond Payne BK#0459 and Andre Price BK#0552

## **SUP WELFARE PLAN**

#### **New Fiscal Year**

The new fiscal year starts August 1, 2025 and runs through July 31, 2026. Charges for services incurred on August 1, 2025 and after will be eligible for reimbursement consideration in the new fiscal year. Charges for services incurred prior to August 1, 2025 can only be considered for services in the prior fiscal year even if they are submitted for reimbursement after August 1, 2025.

All services submitted for reimbursement consideration, including copayments for active participants and reimbursements of eligible expenses under the Pensioners Annual Allowance, must be submitted to the Plan office within 180 days of the date of services or within 180 days of the processing date of the primary insurance plan.

#### **Summary Plan Descriptions and Benefit Forms**

Summary Plan Descriptions for the SUP Welfare Plan and the SIU Pacific District Pension Plan, and a variety of benefit forms for the SUP Welfare Plan, SUP 401(k) Plan and SUP Money Purchase Pension Plan, can be found online at the West Coast Sailors website under the **Benefits tab**. You can also find at that location helpful lists of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) pertaining to distributions from the SUP 401(k) Plan and the SUP Money Purchase Pension Plan.

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brian@marinerbenefits.org

Gina Jew, Claims gina@marinerbenefits.org Michael Jacyna, Eligibility michael@marinerbenefits.org Hazel Ywan, SIU-PD Trusts Accountant hazel@marinerbenefits.org Derek Chang, SIU-PD Supplemental Benefits,

Contributions derek@marinerbenefits.org
Dan Gaipa, SIU-PD Pension Plan dan@marinerbenefits.org
Training Representative Berit Eriksson 206-551-1870
berittrainrep@sbcglobal.net

SUP Welfare Plan 730 Harrison Street Suite 415, San Francisco, CA 94107 Phone Numbers: 415-778-5490 or 1-800-796-8003 Fax: 415-778-5495 SIU-PD Pension 415-764-4987 SIU-PD Supplemental Benefits 415-764-4991 Seafarers Medical Center 415-392-3611

## West Coast Lailors

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## Why Ed Case's Maritime Reform Plan Misses the Bigger Picture

Representative Ed Case (D-HI) has long positioned himself as a champion of affordability and shipping reform for Hawaii. But his relentless push to dismantle the Jones Act, America's cornerstone maritime law, has drawn sharp criticism from maritime unions, national security experts, and even fellow lawmakers. Critics argue that Case's approach is misguided, economically short-sighted, and ultimately dangerous for both Hawaii and the United States.

At the heart of Case's campaign is his belief that the Jones Act, which requires goods shipped between U.S. ports to be transported on U.S.-built, U.S.-flagged, and U.S.-crewed vessels, artificially inflates costs in noncontiguous states like Hawaii. In early 2025, he reintroduced a trio of bills — most notably the Noncontiguous Shipping Relief Ac— aimed at either exempting Hawaii from the Jones Act

entirely or weakening its core provisions. His latest legislative effort, the Noncontiguous Energy Relief and Access Act, seeks to allow foreign tankers to deliver fuel to Hawaii — directly undercutting the domestic maritime industry.

Yet while Case insists these reforms would benefit local consumers, industry experts warn that gutting the Jones Act could unravel the U.S. maritime workforce, weaken national shipbuilding capabilities, and increase reliance on foreign-controlled fleets — particularly from geopolitical rivals like China.

"The Jones Act isn't just an economic policy — it's a national security firewall," says Mike Roberts, president of the American Maritime Partnership. "Ed Case's proposals, if enacted, would open the door to foreign vessels operating freely in U.S. waters, eroding our industrial base and endangering supply chain sovereignty."

Indeed, the Jones Act ensures that the U.S. retains a ready fleet of commercial vessels and trained mariners who can be called upon during wartime or national emergencies. It supports over 650,000 American jobs and pumps billions into the economy. Removing these protections for the sake of marginal savings at the consumer level could have ripple effects across multiple sectors, shipbuilding, labor, and defense among them.

Maritime labor unions have also condemned Case's efforts. The SUP, MFU, MM&P, and MEBAS have all issued statements accusing Case of prioritizing corporate shipping interests over American workers. One MEBA official called his recent energy exemption bill "a direct attack on U.S. merchant mariners."

Even within Hawaii, Case's stance is far from universally popular. While some local business groups support his reforms, a growing chorus of critics argue that blaming the Jones Act for high costs oversimplifies the issue. Factors like geographic isolation, limited land, and tourism-driven inflation also play substantial roles. Case, they say, is offering a political scapegoat rather than real solutions.

Moreover, Case's repeated break from his party, including his June 2025 vote against the "American Cargo for American Ships Act", raises questions about his alignment with broader Democratic economic and labor goals.

Ultimately, Ed Case's war on the Jones Act may win headlines, but it risks weakening U.S. maritime capacity, displacing American workers, and handing more control of domestic shipping routes to foreign entities. In an era of global instability and economic uncertainty, it's a gamble the nation can't afford.

## Maritime Climate Showdown: U.S. Rejects IMO Net-Zero Proposal

In a bold stride towards financial innovation, Panama City's mayor, Mayer Mizrachi, is championing a groundbreaking proposal: permitting cargo ships to pay tolls for the Panama Canal using Bitcoin (BTC) in exchange for expedited passage. First announced at the Bitcoin 2025 conference in Las Vegas on May 29, 2025, this initiative could redefine how the world's most vital maritime artery operates. "We have a canal, what if you get a perk for paying in Bitcoin, get your ship to go quicker if you pay in Bitcoin," Mizrachi mused during the panel, appearing alongside Bitcoin policy figures from El Salvador, including Max Keiser and Stacy Herbert. The suggestion drew attention to Panama's strategic role in global commerce, handling roughly 5% of maritime trade, with nearly 10,000 ship transits and \$5 billion in annual revenue during the fiscal year of October 2023 to September 2024.

Proponents argue that Bitcoin's fast, traceable, and borderless transactions could streamline payment processes and minimize delays, a win for shippers where waiting times can cost up to \$200,000 per day. Beyond logistics, Panama City is already inching toward crypto integration, municipal fees, fines, and permits can now be paid in BTC, ETH, USDC, and other tokens, converted instantly to dollars through local banking systems.

In an August 2025 update, Mizrachi went further, endorsing not just priority access but toll discounts for Bitcoin payments. He envisions this as a mechanism to accumulate a strategic Bitcoin reserve for the city, leveraging recurring BTC transactions from canal operations. Bitcoin advisor Max Keiser has publicly endorsed the idea, highlighting how even

partial Bitcoin payments from the canal's revenue could significantly bolster digital-asset holdings.

Yet, the proposal is not without friction. Critics point to Bitcoin's price volatility, which could jeopardize stable revenue forecasts for Panama's economy. Legal and regulatory frameworks also come into play: any canal-level change would require approval from the Panama Canal Authority and the national government. Concerns have been raised about fairness, with smaller shipping companies potentially unable to compete if Bitcoin premiums provide advantage to larger players. Moreover, while Panama is progressing in crypto regulation, adopting bills for licensing virtual-asset service providers (VASPs), smart contract recognition, and anti-money laundering compliance, skepticism remains. Some lawmakers argue the mayor may

be stepping beyond his authority without thorough expert consultation.

At present, the Panama Canal Authority has not formally responded. Observers await whether the pitch evolves from provocative idea to pilot program, with policymakers balancing innovation against operational risk. If realized, Panama could stake its claim as a crypto-infrastructure pioneer, a model for how digital finance can integrate into critical global infrastructure.

In a world increasingly captivated by financial technologies, the question remains: will paying in Bitcoin become a gateway to accelerated passage, or will traditional toll systems endure? Panama stands poised at a crossroads of tradition and disruption, potentially steering the future of maritime trade.

## California Governor's Race Takes Shape as Kamala Harris Declines to Run

The 2026 race to succeed California Governor Gavin Newsom is officially underway, and with Vice President Kamala Harris confirming she will not enter the race, a wide-open field of Democratic contenders is scrambling to fill the political vacuum left in her wake. Harris announced Tuesday, July 29 that she will not seek California's governorship, ending months of speculation and clearing the way for a competitive, high-stakes contest. "California will always be home, but my focus remains on public service at the national level," Harris said in a statement, widely seen as a signal she is keeping her options open for a possible 2028 presidential run.

Newsom, who is term-limited and cannot seek re-election, will leave office in January 2027. His departure opens the door to what is expected to be one of the most expensive and closely watched gubernatorial contests in the country.

The Democratic primary is already shaping up to be a battleground between establishment figures and progressive challengers.

Leading the pack is former Congresswoman Katie Porter, known for her aggressive questioning during congressional hearings and her progressive platform. Although Porter lost the 2024 U.S. Senate primary, she retains a strong national fundraising network and appeals to younger and more liberal voters. Also vying for the job is Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis, who declared her candidacy early and has spent years building her statewide profile. A former

ambassador to Hungary and longtime Democratic fundraiser, Kounalakis has positioned herself as a business-friendly Democrat with strong ties to Sacramento. Former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra is reportedly exploring a run, backed by his decades of experience in California and Washington. Senate President pro Tempore Emeritus Toni Atkins has also launched a campaign, emphasizing her leadership in state government and legislative accomplishments.

Other Democrats in the mix include former State Controller Betty Yee, current State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, and former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

On the Republican side, the party faces long odds in deep-blue California, but a few contenders are jumping in nonetheless. Among them is Steve Hilton, a former adviser to British Prime Minister David Cameron and a former Fox News personality. Hilton is campaigning on a populist platform, calling for dramatic changes to California's approach to homelessness, crime, and education. Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco has also entered the race, promoting a tough-on-crime agenda. Real estate investor David Serpa and conservative activist Kyle Langford are expected to run as well.

While Republicans haven't won a statewide race in California since 2006, the state's top-two primary system could provide a pathway for a GOP candidate to reach the general election, especially

if Democratic votes are split among multiple contenders.

California will hold its nonpartisan primary on June 2, 2026. The top two vote-getters, regardless of party affiliation, will advance to the November 3 general election.

With Harris out of the running, Democratic candidates now have a clearer path to consolidating support among voters and donors. The next several months will be crucial for candidates hoping to build name recognition, secure

endorsements, and raise the tens of millions needed to compete in the nation's most populous state. "This will be the most competitive Democratic primary California has seen in a generation," said political analyst Maria Estrada. "Without a dominant figure like Harris in the race, it's anybody's game."

As the field continues to expand and campaigns take shape, voters can expect a long and eventful road to Election Day in 2026.



Crew of the *USNS Soderman* on the bow in Baltimore, Maryland. Top row Left to right: Chief Mate Hever Carranza AB, Kennard Graham AB, Gabriel Moreno AB, Angelito Mendoza AB, Deitric Harris OS. Bottom row: Gonzalo Sarra Bosun, Raul Perez OS

# Trump Slaps 50% Tariffs on Indian Imports in Russian Oil Dispute

U.S. President Donald Trump has raised tariffs on Indian goods to a staggering 50%, triggering alarm across India's export sectors and sending ripple effects through the geopolitical landscape. On August 6, President Trump signed an executive order imposing an additional 25% levy on Indian imports, specifically targeting the nation's continued purchase of Russian oil. These new duties will come into force on August 27, with exemptions for goods already in transit, expected to clear customs by September 17. This follows a reciprocal 25% tariff announced earlier, bringing the total U.S. duty on Indian exports to one of the highest globally.

Trump defended the move as a strategic blow to Russia, citing India as one of its largest oil buyers and stating that the tariffs delivered a "big blow" to Moscow's faltering economy. The White House char-

acterized the tariffs as necessary emergency measures in response to India's energy dealings with Russia.

Roughly 55% of India's merchandise exports to the U.S., amounting to billions of dollars, are now vulnerable to these punitive duties. Analysts caution that such steep tariffs jeopardize India's strategic "Make in India" initiative, especially impacting sectors like garments, jewelry, carpets, and seafood. Exporters warn of potential declines in U.S. sales of up to 70%. Moreover, the United States' effective average tariff rate is now nearing the highest in a century. While long-term consumer inflation remains moderate, import prices have risen, particularly for intermediate goods like steel, contributing to modest inflationary pressures.

India responded with strong rhetoric: the foreign ministry called the tariffs "se-

lective and unfair," particularly given other nations, including China, import more Russian oil without facing such severe penalties. Domestically, calls have surfaced for retaliatory duties, including a proposed 50% customs duty on U.S. goods.

High-ranking officials, including NITI Aayog member Arvind Virmani, criticized Trump's approach, noting the U.S. risks overtaking India as the "world's top tariff imposer", an ironic twist on Trump's own "Maharaja of Tariffs" label. Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan added caution, warning that pressuring India to halt Russian oil imports could introduce significant strategic and economic challenges.

Amid the fallout, Indian political leaders and the public have increased calls for boycotting U.S. consumer brands such as Apple, Amazon, Coca-Cola, and McDonald's, further stoking nationalist sentiment

and trade friction.

What began as a promising partnership in early 2025, marked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's U.S. visit and ambitious trade goals, including a \$500 billion bilateral trade vision, has unraveled rapidly. With the collapse of a trade deal and growing distrust, analysts warn the U.S.-India strategic alliance may falter, undermining broader Indo-Pacific goals and nudging India closer to China and Russia.

In short, the latest 50% tariff, designed as a punitive tool over energy security concerns, has escalated into a full-blown trade confrontation with both economic and strategic stakes. As negotiations continue, the coming weeks may determine whether this confrontation devolves further, or if dialogue manages to restore balance between the two powerful democracies.

## Trump Seizes Control of D.C. Police, Deploys 800 National Guard Troops

In an unprecedented exercise of presidential authority, President Donald Trump announced on August 11 that he would deploy 800 National Guard troops to Washington, D.C. and place the city's Metropolitan Police Department under federal control for up to 30 days. At a packed press conference, Trump cited a public safety emergency, labeling D.C. one of the "most dangerous cities anywhere in the world" as justification for his actions, despite official data pointing to a sharp decline in violent crime. City officials and police sources cite a 26% drop in violent crime compared to the previous year, with crime at a 30-year low.

Invoking Section 740 of the 1973 District of Columbia Home Rule Act, Trump

authorized the temporary takeover of the police department, a provision that allows federal control during emergencies for up to 48 hours, or 30 days if extended through formal notification to Congress. Beyond that, legislative approval would be required. Attorney General Pam Bondi was appointed to oversee the Metropolitan Police Department, while the deployed National Guard units, unique in that they fall under presidential, not gubernatorial, authority, will support federal law enforcement activities.

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser described the move as "unsettling and unprecedented," yet signaled willingness to cooperate. District Attorney Brian Schwalb called it "unprecedented, unnecessary and unlawful," arguing no genuine crime emergency exists. Critics, including Democratic governors and legal experts, warn that the federal intervention erodes democratic norms, threatens local autonomy, and may skirt the Posse Comitatus Act, which restricts military involvement in civilian law enforcement. Trump supporters, however, lauded the decisive action, especially amid recent tragic incidents, such as the killing of a congressional intern, which galvanized calls for elevated federal enforcement.

Trump's announcement also included remarks about clearing homeless encampments, cleaning up public housing areas, and launching similar interventions in other Democratic-run cities, names like New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles were specifically mentioned.

Observers note that D.C.'s unique federal status grants presidents broader latitude than in other cities. Yet the move marks a dramatic escalation and may serve as a test case for expanded federal power in urban governance. Without Congressional approval, the 30-day window may be the limit, though political fallout and legal challenges are sure to follow.

As the city braces for an altered command structure and unfamiliar uniforms on its streets, Washington finds itself at the epicenter of a debate over the balance between security and civil liberties, and the very meaning of local self-rule in the nation's capital.

# Collision Between Chinese Naval Forces Highlights Risks in Disputed Waters

A rare maritime mishap involving two Chinese vessels has added fresh volatility to the already tense South China Sea. On August 11, a Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) destroyer collided with a China Coast Guard cutter while both were engaged in a pursuit of a Philippine patrol ship near the disputed Scarborough Shoal. According to video and statements released by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the incident occurred roughly 10.5 nautical miles east of the shoal, well within the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone, as recognized under a 2016 international arbitration ruling that Beijing rejects. The PCG vessel BRP Suluan had been conducting what officials described as a lawful patrol and resupply mission when it was intercepted by multiple Chinese ships.

As the Chinese coast guard cutter CCG 3104 maneuvered to shadow the *Suluan*, the PLAN's *Guilin*, a Type 052D guided-missile destroyer, moved in at high speed from the cutter's port side. In the ensuing close quarters maneuvering, the destroyer's bow scraped across the cutter's forward hull, crumpling metal and disabling the smaller vessel. Dramatic PCG footage shows the cutter's bow pushed inward while the *Guilin* bears visible dents and paint scrapes. Philippine authorities said the PCG offered "man-overboard recovery and medical assistance" to the

damaged Chinese cutter. Beijing has not confirmed any injuries, and Chinese state media have yet to release their own account of the collision.

Manila lodged a formal protest, accusing China of "dangerous and unlawful maneuvers" that placed lives at risk. "This reckless conduct underscores the urgent need for restraint and adherence to international law," the Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. The collision follows a pattern of Chinese use of water cannons, ramming, and aggressive blocking against Philippine vessels in the West Philippine Sea.

The incident came just two days before the United States Navy carried out a freedom-of-navigation operation (FONOP) near Scarborough Shoal, the first such maneuver at the location in years. The destroyer USS Higgins and littoral combat ship USS Cincinnati transited within 30 nautical miles of the shoal, shadowed by Chinese warships. China's military claimed it had "driven away" the U.S. destroyer, an assertion Washington did not acknowledge. Analysts say the collision between two Chinese vessels, while unusual, highlights the inherent risks of increasingly aggressive "grey-zone" tactics, in which China uses its coast guard, navy, and maritime militia to press territorial claims without formal combat.



"When you have large vessels operating at high speed in tight quarters, accidents become a question of when, not if," said maritime security expert Dr. Lian Cheng.

The Scarborough Shoal remains one of the most sensitive flashpoints in the region. Claimed by both China and the Philippines, it is a vital fishing ground and strategically located near key shipping lanes. Any escalation there risks drawing

in the United States, which has a mutual defense treaty with the Philippines.

As of Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup> CCG 3104 was reportedly under tow for repairs, while the *Guilin* has returned to port for assessment. Diplomatic fallout continues, with calls from Japan, Australia, and New Zealand urging all parties to avoid dangerous maneuvers and respect freedom of navigation.

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## **New York Launches Landmark Hybrid-Electric** Ferry to Governors Island

In a leap toward sustainable urban transportation, New York City launched the first public hybrid-electric ferry in the state, the Harbor Charger, with a maiden voyage from the Battery Maritime Building in Lower Manhattan to Governors Island. The eagerly anticipated event coincides with the island's 20th anniversary of public access, marking a milestone in both environmental innovation and public mobility.

Constructed at a cost of \$33 million, the Harbor Charger is engineered to deliver faster, quieter trips while dramatically slashing emissions compared to its diesel-powered predecessors. Visionary in both form and function, the vessel boasts 122 lithium-ion batteries, allowing up to 2.5 hours of electric-only operation before seamlessly switching to diesel backup as battery levels decline. Its quieter, smoother propulsion is a sensory upgrade for commuters and tourists alike.

Capable of trimming travel time by 66%, the Harbor Charger can reach speeds between 10-12 knots, significantly outpacing the aging diesel ferry it replaces: the Lt. Samuel S. Coursen, which has served the route since 1956. The new vessel can accommodate 1,200 passengers and 30 vehicles, reflecting both functional design and ADA accessibility with lounges and restrooms on every level.

Environmental benefits underpin the Harbor Charger's appeal: it emits 70% fewer carbon emissions and promises to save substantial operational costs by reducing annual fuel expenditures, estimated at \$417,000 for traditional diesel ferries. In hybrid mode, it already cuts around 600-800 tons of CO2 annually, with near-zero emissions expected once battery-only capability becomes

Key federal funding under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, approximately \$7.5 million, supports the construction of rapid charging stations on Governors and Manhattan islands, enabling the ferry's transition to fully electric operation in coming years.

"This hybrid ferry marks a historic step forward," said Mayor Eric Adams, emphasizing the city's commitment to cleaner transport and the island's growing function as a hub for climate solutions. Clare Newman, President and CEO of the Trust for Governors Island. christened the vessel in a ceremonial toast and hailed it as a "game-changer" that broadens access while reducing environmental impact.



The Harbor Charger is the first hybrid-electric public ferry to operate in New York State. Photo credit: Timothy Schenck

The Harbor Charger's construction began years ago at Conrad Shipyard in Louisiana, under design by Elliott Bay Design Group, and was a product of collaboration across city agencies and climate advocates. It retains the aesthetic contours of its predecessor, yet its internal mechanics offer state-of-theart green transportation technology. As the Harbor Charger embarks on its inaugural season, retiring the venerable Coursen at year's end, New York sets a bold course: ferrying nearly one million

annual visitors to Governors Island in

cleaner, faster, and greener style.

## **Grace Ocean Private Sues Hyundai Heavy Industries**

Grace Ocean Private Ltd., the owner of the cargo vessel Dali that crashed into Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge in March 2024, has formally filed a lawsuit against the ship's builder, Hyundai Heavy Industries Co., Ltd., citing alleged design flaws that led directly to the fatal collision.

The civil complaint, lodged in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, accuses the Korean shipyard of negligence in its design and construction of a critical electrical control unit, the ship's switchboard. According to the suit, the switchboard's wiring was improperly secured and prone to loosening during normal operation, resulting in sporadic power failures. Grace Ocean as-

serts that these defects rendered the vessel "unreasonably dangerous" the moment it left the builder's control, ultimately causing the steering failure and subsequent allision with the Key Bridge.

The Dali, which was departing Baltimore en route to Sri Lanka when it lost power and crashed, brought down the 1.6mile span. Six roadwork crew members were killed in the collision, and the Port of Baltimore was effectively paralyzed for months. Subsequently, in a high-profile federal case, Grace Ocean and its operator Synergy Marine settled with the U.S. Department of Justice in late October 2024 for approximately \$102 million, a payment covering cleanup and response costs.

This new lawsuit shifts legal attention from government entities to the vessel's manufacturer, marking a crucial turn in the ongoing litigation. Grace Ocean contends that Hyundai's defective manufacturing directly compromised the vessel's reliability at a critical moment, and that the resulting tragedy was thus operators' actions "fed into" by the builder's failings.

Plaintiffs expect Hyundai Heavy Industries to resist liability, and details remain sparse. The court documents do not yet identify the defendants' legal representatives, and the shipyard has not publicly responded to the claims. This case adds a new dimension to the expanding legal saga set in motion by

the Key Bridge collapse, one already involving wrongful death suits filed by victims' families, claims from state and local governments, and defenses based on maritime limitation regimes.

Grace Ocean's lawsuit against Hyundai now sets the stage for a complex product liability battle, with significant technical, legal, and financial implications. As reconstruction efforts in Baltimore continue, currently projected for completion by 2028, attention will turn to whether the manufacturer's alleged negligence contributed materially to one of the nation's most catastrophic maritime infrastructure disasters.

## Panama Canal Weighs Bitcoin for Fast-Track Tolls

The United States on Tuesday, August 12, formally rejected the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) "Net-Zero Framework," a landmark proposal that would impose a global carbon-pricing mechanism on shipping to steer the industry toward cleaner fuels and a 2050 net-zero target. In a joint statement, senior members of the Trump administration said the initiative would impose "substantial economic burdens" on American consumers, businesses and the nation's shipping and energy sectors.

The framework, agreed in draft by IMO negotiators in April, combines a mandatory marine fuel standard with a greenhouse-gas pricing mechanism, effectively a sector-wide carbon levy or crediting system, intended to create a market signal that rewards low emissions fuels and penalizes those that lag. Proponents say the measure is the first of its kind to apply a binding emissions price across a global industry.

U.S. officials framed their opposition as a defense of American households and industry. The State Department release said Washington would work to "defeat" the framework at the IMO's extraordinary session scheduled for October, arguing that the plan would increase costs for energy providers, freight users and tourists and could drive inflation. The statement also urged other member states to reconsider support for what it labeled a "global carbon tax."

The American announcement follows months of escalating tensions over the measure. The U.S. delegation walked out of formal talks on the proposal in April and signaled it would not accept binding global levies negotiated under U.N.-led forums. Environmental advocates slammed the decision as a step backward for global climate cooperation, while some industry actors warned it could complicate international shipping operations and raise geopolitical friction.

Shipping accounts for roughly 2-3 percent of global CO2 emissions, and the IMO's framework was designed to accelerate adoption of zero- and near-zero hydrogen and synthetic fuels, by making clean shipping and climate adaptation fossil bunker fuels progressively more in developing ports. Proponents say expensive. The framework's authors estimate that a stable, global price signal will be essential to de-risk investments in new fuel production and ship conversions. Critics of the framework, including the U.S. statement, counter that the costs would disproportionately hit import-dependent economies and consumers.

Industry reaction was mixed. Several major carriers and shipowners have already committed publicly to net-zero targets and investments in alternative fuels, but they stopped short of endorsing political battles over the mechanism to get there. Shipowner groups warned that a fracturing of international consensus, with the world's largest maritime trading power opposing the plan, could slow deployment of global standards and complicate compliance for multinational fleets.

Smaller and island nations, many of which face acute climate vulnerabilities, have argued that a global fund or levy is

(ZNZ) fuels, such as green ammonia, necessary to finance both a transition to unilateral or regional measures would be less effective, create market distortions and leave many countries without the financial resources to decarbonize. The IMO framework was presented as a compromise intended to steer capital towards low-carbon fuel production while providing support to developing states.

With the October extraordinary session looming, the U.S. move raises the specter of a showdown at the IMO. If the framework is adopted without Washington, the U.S. may face choices over participation  $in\,enforcement, flag-state\,compliance\,and$ how to shield American industry from new costs, or, as some reports suggested, contemplate retaliatory measures against countries that back the plan. For now, international negotiators and shipping firms will be watching closely as member states weigh economic risks against the urgency of cutting greenhouse gases from a critical global sector.

## **Coast Guard: Titan Sub Tragedy a Result of Avoidable Mistakes**

The U.S. Coast Guard's Marine Board of Investigation (MBI) released a scathing 300-page Report of Investigation (ROI) Tuesday, concluding that the catastrophic implosion of the Titan submersible during its June 2023 descent to the Titanic wreck was "preventable" and resulted from a series of systemic failures at OceanGate, the company behind the ill-fated expedition.

The report, which marks the culmination of two-year investigation by multiple agencies, paints a damning picture of OceanGate's safety culture, engineering practices, and operational oversight. All five people aboard the submersible were killed instantly when the vessel suffered a "catastrophic implosion" just hours into its dive approximately 12,500 feet beneath the North Atlantic. According to the Coast Guard, the Titan's carbon fiber hull, an unconventional choice in the world of deep-sea submersibles, showed signs of material fatigue and delamination prior to the fatal dive. Investigators determined that OceanGate repeatedly ignored warnings from industry experts and its own consultants, some of whom raised serious concerns about the integrity of the vessel and the lack of independent safety certification. "The loss of the Titan and its five occupants was a tragedy that could have been avoided," said Rear Admiral Jason Neubauer, chair of the Marine Board

of Investigation. "Our findings reveal a troubling disregard for established safety protocols and engineering standards. This tragedy was the result of systemic lapses that extended from design and testing to operational decision-making."

OceanGate's late CEO Stockton Rush, who was piloting the vessel when it imploded, had previously rejected calls to seek classification from recognized marine safety bodies. In recorded interviews prior to the incident, Rush claimed that regulatory red tape stifled innovation. The MBI, however, found that the absence of third-party certification removed critical checks that may have prevented the disaster.

The ROI also highlights a "culture of silence" within the company, in which dissenting engineers and staff were allegedly marginalized or ignored. One former employee, David Lochridge, had warned in a 2018 report of potential catastrophic failure due to insufficient testing. He was later fired and filed a whistleblower complaint. The Coast Guard's report includes over 30 recommendations, including stronger oversight for submersibles operating in international waters, mandatory certification for commercial expeditions, and enhanced coordination between federal agencies and international partners. The MBI also urged Congress to consider



new legislation to close regulatory gaps that currently allow unclassified vessels to carry paying passengers to extreme depths.

Families of the victims, who included Rush, British billionaire Hamish Harding, Pakistani father and son Shahzada and Suleman Dawood, and French explorer Paul-Henri Nargeolet, welcomed the report but called for further accountability. "OceanGate gambled with lives in the name of adventure and profit," said a statement from the Dawood family. "We hope this report leads to meaningful reform and ensures no one else has to endure such a loss."

The Coast Guard will now refer its findings to the U.S. Department of Justice, which may pursue civil or criminal charges. International agencies, including Canada's Transportation Safety Board and the U.K.'s Marine Accident Investigation Branch, are also conducting parallel investigations.

## From Piracy to Cyberattacks: UN Confronts Rising Maritime Dangers

The United Nations Security Council convened Monday August 11th for a high-stakes debate on maritime security, warning that global shipping lanes, the arteries of international commerce, are facing unprecedented challenges from geopolitical tensions, piracy, and emerging cyber threats. The session, held at UN headquarters in New York, was chaired by Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino, who presides over the Security Council for August. The meeting brought together diplomats, naval officials, shipping executives, and maritime safety experts to discuss the mounting pressures confronting by volume.

In his keynote address, Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), stressed the indispensable role of seafarers in sustaining the global economy. "A workforce of just 1.9 million seafarers moved over 12.3 billion tons of goods last year," Dominguez noted. "They quite literally keep global trade afloat." Dominguez pointed to the growing intersection of traditional security concerns, such as piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and attacks on commercial

a sector responsible for moving 80-90% of world trade vessels in the Red Sea, with new and rapidly evolving dangers, including cyber intrusions targeting navigation systems and port infrastructure.

> Speakers highlighted how maritime chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el-Mandeb, and the South China Sea have become flashpoints for geopolitical rivalry. Escalating confrontations between state and non-state actors have endangered shipping routes that carry trillions of dollars in goods annually. Mulino underscored Panama's particular interest in safeguarding maritime corridors, citing the Panama Canal's role as a

> > critical nexus in the global supply chain. "Any threat to the security and stability of shipping lanes is a threat to the stability of nations," he

> > The Council also examined the resurgence of piracy in certain regions, fueled by economic desperation, political instability, and organized crime. While coordinated naval patrols have reduced attacks off Somalia, incidents in West Africa remain a serious concern. Representatives from coastal states called for more investment in maritime law enforcement, intelligence-sharing, and economic development to address root causes.

> > In one of the most urgent topics discussed, cybersecurity experts briefed the Council on the rising frequency of hacks aimed at disrupting ship operations and port logistics. Such incidents, they warned, could cripple supply chains and cause cascading effects far beyond the maritime sector. Calls were made for a binding international framework on cyber resilience in shipping, akin to existing safety conventions. Several member states urged deeper collaboration between the IMO, naval coalitions, regional security forums, and the private sector. Proposals included expanding vessel tracking capabilities, increasing joint naval exercises, and enhancing training for seafarers on threat

> > Dominguez concluded with a call for unity: "Maritime security is not a regional issue. It is a shared global responsibility, and one that demands immediate, coordinated action."

As the debate closed, diplomats agreed that the Council's next steps should balance shortterm risk mitigation with long-term investment in resilience, recognizing that in a fragile world economy, safe seas remain a non-negotiable foundation for peace and prosperity.



AFLCIO.ORG/SCHOOLSUPPLIES

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# Newsom Pushes Ballot Measure to Let Democrats Redraw California's Congressional Map

California Governor Gavin Newsom formally kicked off a high-stakes campaign to persuade voters to approve a ballot measure that would pause the state's independent redistricting commission and hand authority over congressional maps back to the Democratic-controlled legislature. Dubbed the *Election Rigging Response Act* by the governor's own campaign, the proposal is an aggressive counter to what Newsom calls "Republican power grabs" in GOP-controlled states, where legislatures have redrawn maps to favor their party and, in many cases, cement their congressional dominance.

"Donald Trump and his allies are redrawing maps across the country to squeeze out Democratic voices and rig the game for years to come," Newsom said in his launch speech at a rally in Los Angeles. "California will not sit back and watch. We're going to fight back, and yes, that means redrawing the board." Newsom said he intends to call a special

statewide election for Nov. 4, aiming to give the measure a clear spotlight ahead of the 2026 midterms. The campaign will be backed by millions in advertising from Democratic donors, unions, and progressive advocacy groups.

If passed, the measure would temporarily halt the operations of California's voter-approved Citizens Redistricting Commission, created in 2008 to curb partisan gerrymandering. Instead, the legislature, where Democrats hold supermajorities in both chambers, would take over the process of creating new congressional district boundaries. The plan would be in effect only for the upcoming redistricting cycle but could have far-reaching political consequences.

Democratic leaders in Sacramento are expected to unveil their proposed congressional map later today. Legislative aides familiar with the drafts say the plan is designed to carve out three to five additional Democratic-leaning districts, targeting areas in the Central Valley,

the Inland Empire, and parts of Orange County where Republican incumbents have won by narrow margins in recent cycles. "The reality is, not all of these seats are slam dunks," one Democratic strategist told The Chronicle. "But even two or three pickups could make the difference in whether Democrats control the House." The move comes as national Democrats search for ways to claw back the House majority, which Republicans currently hold by a slim margin. In several red states, GOP lawmakers have drawn maps widely criticized as partisan gerrymanders — maps that, in some cases, have been upheld by state courts. Newsom's allies argue California should respond in kind to level the playing field.

Republican leaders blasted the plan as a blatant power grab. "This is the definition of election rigging," said California GOP Chairwoman Jessica Millan Patterson. "Newsom and Sacramento Democrats are proving they care more about their own

power than about fair representation for Californians."

Good-government groups are also uneasy. The nonpartisan group Common Cause California warned that dismantling the independent commission, even temporarily, could undermine public trust in elections and set a dangerous precedent. "Once you break the firewall against gerrymandering, it's hard to build it back," said Jonathan Mehta Stein, the group's executive director.

Political analysts say the measure's fate will depend on how it is framed to voters. Polls have shown Californians broadly support the idea of independent redistricting, but Democrats may be able to sway opinion by portraying the proposal as necessary self-defense against Republican maneuvers elsewhere. With less than three months before the vote, both parties are preparing for an expensive, high-visibility battle over who draws the lines, and who holds the power in Washington

## **Spanish Warship From Colonial Era Discovered Off North Carolina Coast**

Maritime archaeologists from East Carolina University have confirmed the identity of a centuries-old shipwreck found off the coast of North Carolina as a Colonial-era Spanish warship, a rare discovery that sheds new light on the maritime history of the southeastern United States. The wreck was first located earlier this year by a team conducting unrelated underwater surveys near Cape Lookout. Initially thought to be the remains of a local merchant vessel, detailed examination revealed a far older and more significant origin. "This is one of the most important finds of my career," said Dr. Laura Bennett, a

maritime archaeology professor at East Carolina University (ECU) who led the investigation. "It's not often that we uncover such a well-preserved example of a Spanish naval vessel from the Colonial period, especially in these waters."

Using a combination of remote sensing equipment, dive inspections, and historical research, the team determined that the vessel likely dates to the mid-18th century. Artifacts recovered so far include bronze cannons bearing the royal crest of Spain, navigational instruments, and fragments of glazed pottery. Spanish naval records suggest the warship may have been part of a convoy traveling between Havana

and Cádiz, transporting goods, troops, and official correspondence. Its presence off North Carolina raises questions about whether it strayed off course during a storm or was pursuing another vessel when it met its fate.

"The fact that we're finding a Spanish warship so far north hints at a much broader pattern of movement and conflict than previously documented," Bennett explained. "It tells us that these waters were part of a complex and contested maritime world during the Colonial era."

The wreck lies in about 80 feet of water, making it accessible to experienced divers, though officials have not disclosed its exact coordinates to protect it from looting. North Carolina's Department of Natural and Cultural Resources has designated the site a protected underwater cultural heritage location.

Preservation work is already under- North Carolina's coast.

way. Saltwater encrustations must be carefully removed from recovered items, and organic materials such as wooden planks require specialized treatment to prevent deterioration. ECU's conservation laboratory will house the artifacts, with plans for a public exhibition in the coming years. Local historians hope the find will also boost heritage tourism in the region. "This discovery is a reminder that our coast holds stories from far beyond our own state's history," said David Morales, curator at the North Carolina Maritime Museum. "It's a piece of global history lying right offshore."

For now, the archaeologists continue to map the wreck site and document its contents. Each dive brings new clues, and the hope of answering the lingering question of how a Spanish warship from the age of empires came to rest beneath the waves of North Carolina's coast.

#### **National Maritime Center**

Keep 'em Safe, Keep 'em Sailing



#### New Application Status and Credential Verification Web-based Tools Now Available

The National Maritime Center (NMC) is pleased to announce the launch of two new self-service tools, available via the <a href="NMC website">NMC website</a>, are designed to assist mariners and industry stakeholders with obtaining Mariner Credential Application Status and Mariner Credential Verification.

- <u>Mariner Credential Application Status</u>: This tool allows users to receive application status updates via e-mail. To use this service, users must provide **Mariner's Last Name**,
   <u>Mariner's Reference Number</u>, and a valid e-mail address where results will be sent.
   <u>Note:</u> Application status data is updated Monday through Friday by 8:00 a.m. EST.
- Mariner Credential Verification: This tool provides credential verification results, via
  e-mail, for merchant mariner credentials and medical certificates. To use this service, users
  must provide Mariner's Last Name, Mariner's Reference Number, and a valid
  e-mail address where results will be sent. Once a submission is complete, users may click
  the Submit another response link to perform additional verifications.
   Note: Credential verification data is updated Monday through Friday by 8:00 a.m. EST.

For more information or to access the tools, please visit the <u>NMC website</u>. If you have questions or require assistance, contact the NMC Customer Service Center, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. EST, by using <u>Live Chat</u>, by e-mailing <u>iasknmc@uscg.mil</u>, or by

We are committed to providing you with exceptional service and hope these new tools offer added convenience and efficiency to our mariner community.

Sincerely,

/P. A. Drayer/

Patrick A. Drayer Captain, U.S. Coast Guard Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection

calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

## **Fast Facts About Sharks**

- **1. Sharks predate dinosaurs.** Sharks have been around for over 400 million years; that's about 200 million years before the dinosaurs appeared!
- **2.** They can detect electricity. Sharks have special organs called ampullae of Lorenzini that let them detect the electrical fields given off by living creatures, even buried prey.
- **3.** Their teeth never stop growing. Sharks lose teeth all the time, but they constantly grow new ones in rows like a conveyor belt, some can go through 30,000 teeth in a lifetime.
- **4. Not all sharks are fierce predators.** The whale shark is the largest shark (and fish) in the world, but it only eats plankton! It's a gentle giant that can grow over 40 feet long.
- **5. Some sharks glow in the dark.** Certain deep-sea sharks like the lanternshark have bioluminescent skin, which may help them camouflage, attract mates, or confuse predators.
- **6.** They have super-hearing. Sharks can hear low-frequency sounds from up to 800 feet away, which helps them detect struggling fish or distant movement in the ocean.
- **7. Sharks don't have bones.** Their skeletons are made entirely of cartilage; the same flexible material found in human noses and ears. This makes them light and fast swimmers.
- **8. Some sharks can live for centuries.** The Greenland shark is believed to be the longest-living vertebrate, estimates suggest some individuals may be over 400 years old.
- **9.** They can go into a trance. If you flip certain sharks upside down, they enter a state called tonic immobility, where they go completely still for several minutes. Scientists use this to safely handle them.
- **10.** They play an essential role in ocean health. By eating the weak and sick, sharks help maintain the balance of marine ecosystems, making them a keystone species crucial for ocean health.

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## The Roots of Labor Day: Honoring America's Workers Through History

continued from page 1 New York did the same.

Labor Day remained a state-level celebration until a national crisis accelerated its recognition. In 1894, a nationwide railroad strike erupted after workers at the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago protested wage cuts while still being required to pay high rents in company-owned housing. The American Railway Union, led by Eugene V. Debs, supported a boycott of trains that used Pullman cars. The strike paralyzed rail traffic and led to violent clashes. The federal government, under President Grover Cleveland, sent troops to suppress the strike, resulting in the deaths of several workers.

In the wake of the tragedy and growing public outrage, Congress quickly passed legislation making Labor Day a national holiday. President Cleveland signed the bill into law on June 28, 1894, just days after the strike ended. It was a gesture intended to mend relations with labor while avoiding support for the more politically charged May Day

labor celebrations favored by socialists and anarchists.

In the decades that followed, Labor Day evolved from a day of protest and political speeches into a more relaxed holiday. Many of its early messages have faded, replaced by barbecues, retail sales, and time off with family and friends. Yet the spirit of the day remains rooted in honoring workers' achievements. The eight-hour workday, weekends off, workplace safety rules, and the ban on child labor all stem from the efforts of organized labor.

Today, as the workforce continues to change with the rise of automation, gig jobs, and new labor movements, Labor Day still offers an important moment for reflection. It reminds us of the ongoing struggles faced by workers and the progress made through collective bargaining. Whether you are enjoying a parade, spending time with family, or working through the holiday, take a moment to remember the generations of Americans who fought for the rights and protections many of us benefit from today.





Former SUP President Harry Lundeberg leading members of the SUP in San Francisco's 1946 Labor Day Parade.

## Congress Must Pass SHIPS Act to Revitalize U.S. Maritime Industry, Increasing American Jobs & Enhancing National Security

Federal lawmakers recently introduced the bipartisan and bicameral Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security for America Act of 2025 (SHIPS Act). This bill represents the most comprehensive effort by Congress to revitalize our nation's maritime supply chains in decades and will deliver policy solutions to encourage investment in the U.S. shipping industry and rebuild America's maritime capability. As America's largest transportation labor federation, TTD strongly endorses this bill, which will institute reforms long sought by labor to strengthen America's maritime workforce and our national and economic security.

#### Shipbuilding and Expanding America's Fleet

The U.S. commercial fleet has been in decline for decades due to several factors, including the U.S. government's lack of investment compared to other countries that directly subsidize their shipbuilding industries. The SHIPS Act aims to address this by establishing a new Strategic Commercial Fleet Program (SCFP). SCFP would incentivize a fleet of U.S.-flagged, U.S.-built, and U.S.-crewed vessels in international commerce that are militarily useful and commercially viable, with the aim of growing the U.S.-flagged fleet by 250 ships. Additional provisions include tax credits for investments aimed at expanding the U.S.-flagged fleet. Such tax incentives would cover the construction of oceangoing vessels and rebuilding shipyards in the United States. The bill also creates incentives for moving import and export cargo on U.S.-flagged vessels and to reform outdated regulations that undermine the competitiveness of the U.S.-flagged fleet.

Furthermore, the bill authorizes \$250 million annually for the next 10 years for domestic shipbuilding projects and expands the Assistance for Small Shipyards grants to \$100 million annually. It also establishes a financial incentive program to support investments in U.S. shipbuilding, shipyards, and critical supply chain facilities. Lastly, the bill proposes essential reforms to the Title XI Federal Ship Financing Program to ensure that America's shipbuilding industry not only survives but can viably compete in the global market.

#### Strengthening U.S. Cargo Preference

To further strengthen the U.S.-flag fleet, the SHIPS Act would increase the percentage of U.S. government cargo that must sail on U.S.-flagged vessels to 100 percent. The new Maritime Security Trust Fund would reimburse U.S. agencies for the differential in transportation costs when they exceed market rates for utilizing U.S.-flagged vessels to transport international food aid. The bill would also require a new commercial cargo preference standard to be established, requiring that 10 percent of all cargo imported to the United States from China be carried via U.S.-flagged vessels. Furthering the advantage for shippers to use U.S.-flag vessels, this bill would also establish that U.S.-flagged vessels shall be given priority over waiting foreign vessels at any U.S. port. By standing firm on extending policy preference to the U.S. fleet, important gains can be made in expanding and strengthening our domestic maritime capacity.

#### Investing in the U.S. Maritime Workforce

The domestic maritime industry is in dire need of more mariners to operate U.S.-flagged ships, which are essential for supporting Department of Defense missions and transporting American troops deployed worldwide. The U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) estimated in 2017 that more than 1,800 additional mariners would be needed to sufficiently support the United States in a sustained military crisis, and that gap has likely increased over the past several years. American mariners are indispensable to our national economy and international trade; however, their relatively low numbers make up one component of America's declining influence in global maritime commerce and pose a risk to U.S. national security.

The SHIPS for America Act would institute several labor-backed workforce development reforms for the industry. This legislation would allow U.S. merchant mariners to be eligible for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and provide fuel funding for training ships used by State Maritime Academies. The bill would also make credentialed mariners with more than 10 years of experience and who have received a mariner medal eligible to receive educational assistance under the GI bill. It would also reward merchant mariners for their service by extending federal employment hiring preference to mariners who have served more than 10 years on a U.S. vessel.

America's merchant mariners are highly skilled and credentialed. This bill makes important investments in the education pipeline for this workforce as well, including running public recruitment campaigns, funding Centers of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education, identifying opportunities for retiring military service members to transition to a maritime career, modernizing infrastructure and facilities at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and providing dedicated funding to State Maritime Academies.

#### Missing Tax Incentives for U.S. Shippers

As our industry is forced to compete against foreign companies who refuse to play by the same set of rules, Congress must pursue a renewed national maritime policy that enables U.S.-flagged vessels to better compete in international commerce. While we strongly support the SHIPS Act, Congress and the Administration should seek to leverage the U.S. tax code to incentivize "big box" American retailers, agricultural exporters, and other businesses that import and export for moving consumer and manufacturing goods in international commerce. Ultimately, such tax incentives would substantially increase cargo transported on American-owned vessels and maintain the commercial viability needed for U.S. vessel operators in the face of unfair foreign competition.

Transportation labor appreciates the recent actions of Congress, as well as the Administration's Executive Order, to restore America's maritime competitiveness in recognizing the urgent challenges facing the American maritime and shipbuilding industries. We must continue to advocate for and support the American mariners and shippard workers who are ready, willing, and able to restore American maritime independence, bolstering our economic security and national security at home and at sea. The SHIPS for America Act of 2025 offers a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to revitalize our domestic maritime industry, and Congress must act swiftly to pass this legislation.

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## SUP PRESIDENT'S REPORT

#### PATRIOT CONTRACT SERVICES

As reported last month in the SUP Presidents report there was a short extension to the RRF fleet, but MARAD would be awarding the full contracts in the following weeks. On Tuesday July 29th the SUP was notified by Patriot's Chief Legal Officer Boriana Farrar that Patriot was awarded the new RRF contracts to the *Cape Victory, Cape Vincent, Cape Henry, Cape Horn, Cape Hudson, Cape Orlando* and *Admiral Callaghan*. Unfortunately, Patriot will not be managing the three Cape T's as before. The targeted transfer date is August 18, 2025, for the Cape T's. Currently, there are 51 ships covered under the RRF with Patriot now operating seven of them.

Later in the week, on Friday August 8th I was notified by head of Marine Personnel for Patriot, Emily Black that MARAD has changed manning/billets for ROS. Starting August 18th MARAD has eliminated the GUDE & GVA from the ROS billets and replaced them with a Wiper and an Oiler. Those jobs will be called by the MFOW. As I stated upon finding this out and will continue to say, there is no possible way with just a bosun that the needed deck maintenance and operation on these ships can happen. Patriot did not disagree and will also continue to advocate for there to be more unlicensed deck positions in ROS.

On Tuesday August 12th, myself and MFOW President Anthony Poplawski were on a conference call with Patriot regarding the wage scale that I sent out to the branches at the end of July. It was my understanding that we were to receive a 6% increase after the 12% increase which we received last year. Unfortunately the 12% raise was given during the bridge contract and since this is the first year of the new 5 year RRF agreement there will be no increase to wages. The 6% increase will go into effect next year on the 2nd year of the contract.

Watson Class: U.S. Representative Rep. Nancy Mace (R-South Carolina) submitted an amendment to the House Defense Appropriations Bill prohibiting the Army and Navy form getting rid of the APS-3 ships. On July 15th, the following Amendment was included and approved in the House HASC NDAA bill (see communications packet). There is still a long way to go to have the six Army Watson Class vessels remain in FOS but there has been push back in Washington from our Union leaders, industry, and congress. As of now, the USNS Wastson is the first scheduled ship to go into ROS (August 31, 2025). The manning will be 1 Bosun, 2 AB's, and 1 OS while in ROS.

**Allied Pacific:** On August 7th, SUP was given notice of the Government's intention to exercise Option Period 2 of the subject contract for the period of October 6, 2025-October 5, 2026. It is important to note that this notice does not obligate the Government to exercise this option but provides notice of the Government's intention to do so.

#### **MATSON NAVIGATION**

In late July Matson announced they have suspended their transporting of electric and plug in hybrid vehicles. "Due to increasing concern for the safety of transporting vehicles powered by large lithium-ion batteries, Matson is suspending acceptance of used or new electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid vehicles for transport aboard its vessels," the company stated in a customer advisory. This comes on the backdrop of ships like the Morning Midas recently catching fire 300 miles off the coast of Alaska and the crew having to abandon ship.

Construction officially began on the first of three new Aloha Class containerships for Matson, as the initial grand block of the Matson Makua was lowered into dry dock on August 4, marking the start of the hull assembly. "Today's keel laying marks more than the beginning of another great ship, it symbolizes the strength of our ongoing partnership with Matson and our shared commitment to American shipbuilding," remarked David Kim, Hanwha Philly Shipyard CEO. In 2018 and 2019 the Daniel K. Inouye and Kaimana Hila were built in the Philly Shipyard, however, the current project marks a new chapter, as it is the first Aloha Class build under the shipyard's new ownership. South Korea's Hanwha Systems and Hanwha Ocean acquired the shipyard in 2024. The new 854-foot Aloha Class ships will each have a carrying capacity of 3,600 TEU and are designed to operate at speeds exceeding 23 knots, making them among the fastest, most efficient ships in Matson's fleet. The three new Aloha Class ships are due to be delivered to Matson in 2027 and 2028.

#### **APL**

As reported in March, Rodolphe Saadé, CEO of CMA CGM had a meeting with President Trump and pledged to invest 20 billion dollars into the United States over the next four years. This would be done in a variety of ways, but most importantly to the SUP, would be reflagging 20 ships into the US maritime industry through their subsidiary APL.

MFOW President Anthony Poplawski and I had a meeting with Gregory Doyle of APL and he informed us that the first group (4) of US flagged ships would be calling ports on the East Coast and that APL would use AMO and SIU crews. While the ships would be an APL ship, the company that would operate/manage them would be Osprey who have previously had contracts with AMO and SIU. There was a promise if ships were on the West Coast, SUP would be given the opportunity to reach a deal with APL to crew them at a lower non-MSP rate as in previous years. It's important to note that Osprey is a defunct company that has not operated a ship in almost ten years. The actual people that will be working for "Osprey" are the same people, in the same office that work for APL. This is unfortunate shell game that employers commonly use to reduce wages and finagle out of their collective bargaining agreements. SUP has maintained a contract with APL for over 50 years and crewed MSP and non-MSP ships on the East and West Coasts, with no issues.

I want the membership to know; we will not just sit back and take this. Everything is on the table, no stone will be unturned. Currently our attorneys our reviewing the agreement and will give legal advice going forward on what action we take next. I will do my best to keep the membership and our Branch Agents informed as this goes forward.

#### TRANSPORTATION TRADES DEPARTMENT

I attended the annual TTD Convention on Saturday, July 26 in New York. Greg Regan was re-elected to President, a position he has held since 2021 and Shari Semelsberger was re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer, a position she has also held since 2021. For those unaware, TTD is the largest transportation labor federation representing 39 unions in the aviation, rail, maritime, transit, and public service, industries.

During the convention TTD approved the policy statement: "Congress Must Pass SHIPS ACT to revitalize U.S. Maritime Industry, Increasing American Jobs and Enhancing Security." (See communications packet).

#### MARITIME SECURITY PROGRAM

The Senate Committee on Appropriations has approved full funding for the Maritime Security Program for Fiscal Year 2026. The legislation, which now goes to the full Senate for further action, contains \$390 million for MSP, an amount that would provide \$6.5 million per vessel.

In contrast, the legislation reported by the House Committee on Appropriations contains \$380 million for MSP for Fiscal Year 2026, \$10 million less than Congress had authorized.

The Maritime Security Program is a vital component of America's military strategic sealift and global response capability. It is designed to ensure that the nation has the US-flag commercial sealift capacity and trained US-citizen merchant mariners necessary in times of war or national emergencies.

#### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

In regard to the story on page 1 about FEMA and USCIS stripping employees of union protections, let's be clear: when a government agency invokes "national security" to justify these actions, the public should be skeptical. Last week's decision by USCIS and FEMA to cancel all collective bargaining agreements has nothing to do with border safety or disaster response readiness, and everything to do with consolidating power at the expense of workers' rights.

By revoking grievance procedures, dismantling arbitration rights, and forcing union reps back into full-time operational roles, management has effectively muzzled the very people who safeguard workplace fairness. This move eliminates a critical check on managerial authority, granting leaders unfettered control over schedules, workloads, and discipline without fear of challenge.

The claim that "union management diverts time and energy" from the mission is a false dichotomy. A well-functioning union doesn't weaken an agency, it strengthens it by protecting the workforce from burnout, retaliation, and unsafe conditions. When disaster strikes, FEMA depends on experienced, protected employees. When immigration cases surge, USCIS needs a stable, supported staff.

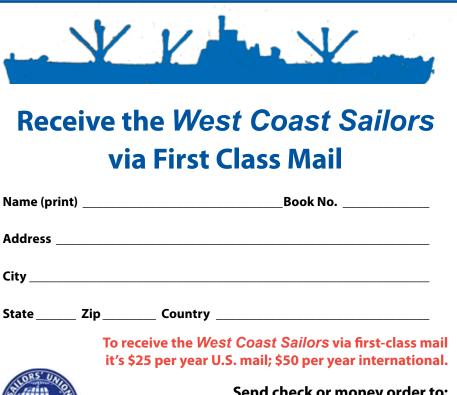
Silencing workers is not a sign of a strong security apparatus; it's a hallmark of a government more concerned with obedience than justice. National security should never become the pretext for dismantling workplace democracy.

If FEMA and USCIS truly value the missions they claim to protect, they should reinstate bargaining rights immediately, not because the unions demand it, but because the American public deserves a federal workforce that can speak up without fear.

#### **HOLIDAYS**

**Labor Day:** SUP halls will be closed on Monday September 1, 2025, for Labor Day. All hours worked on Labor Day are overtime.

Matt Henning





Send check or money order to: West Coast Sailors 450 Harrison Street, San Francisco CA 94105

# FEMA, USCIS Abruptly Strip Workers of Union Protections

continued from page 1 cellations will likely trigger a fight before the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) or in federal court. But in the meantime, employees must operate without the protections they have relied on for decades.

The action by USCIS and FEMA follows similar rollbacks at other agencies in recent months, suggesting a broader federal push to sideline organized labor. If left unchallenged, advocates warn, this could signal the most dramatic erosion of federal employee rights in a generation. "Today it's FEMA and USCIS," said a former federal labor negotiator. "Tomorrow, it could be the entire civil service stripped

of its ability to collectively defend itself." For now, FEMA and USCIS employees

For now, FEMA and USCIS employees face a workplace where management sets all the terms and the only option for recourse is to comply, or risk retaliation. Without union representatives able to operate freely, grievances will go unheard, and workplace safety concerns may be ignored. The broader question is whether this move marks a temporary suspension of rights or a permanent dismantling of collective bargaining in the federal workforce. Either way, labor advocates say the message to public servants is chillingly clear: their voices at the bargaining table are no longer welcome.

## Meteorite Smashes Into Georgia Home After Fiery Streak Across Southern

On the night of June 26, a streak of light tore across the skies of the southeastern United States, captivating anyone lucky enough to catch a glimpse. The brilliant fireball, caused by a meteorite plunging into Earth's atmosphere at extraordinary speed, ended its journey in the most unlikely of places: the living room floor of a Georgia home. According to the University of Georgia, the space rock was moving at a speed equivalent to "10 football fields in one second" as it blazed toward Earth. Residents from Alabama to the Carolinas flooded local law enforcement lines with calls describing a blinding white-orange flash across the sky. Those who didn't see the meteorite firsthand often heard it, a deep, resonating sonic boom that rattled windows and startled pets.

For one McDonough resident, however, the celestial visitor made a much more personal impression. A fragment of the meteorite, roughly the size of a cherry tomato, tore through the man's roof before crashing through his attic air duct, shredding insulation, and punching a hole in his ceiling. The rock landed on the floor, carving a small but distinct crater about

half an inch deep. "There was enough energy when it hit the floor that it pulverized part of the material down to literal dust fragments," said Scott Harris, a planetary geologist at the University of Georgia who has been studying the recovered meteorite. Harris described the object as dense, dark, and rich in iron, characteristics typical of many meteoritic fragments.

Scientists say the meteorite originated from somewhere in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter before being nudged onto a collision course with Earth. As it entered the atmosphere, friction heated its surface to thousands of degrees, producing the brilliant streak witnessed across the region. Harris explained that the majority of such meteors never make it to the ground intact. "Most burn up entirely in the atmosphere, but this one was large enough to survive that fiery descent and still have the energy to punch through a house," he said. The homeowner, who has asked not to be named, was uninjured in the incident and is now in possession of a rare piece of cosmic history. The fragment will be temporarily held for further study before potentially being returned to him.

# Los Angeles/Long Beach 46TH ANNUAL LABOR DAY PARADE, PICNIC & RALLY MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2025 March Statts at: Broad & Estreet in Wilmington Assembly Begins at 8:00am March Departs at 8:00am March Departs at 10:00am March Statts at: Broad YE Est Wilmington Formación Empleza 8 AM La Marcha Seile 10 AM Vicients, Malcica, Antibuses de Transpierte, Malcia, Malcia,

# **China's Shipbuilding Titans Set to Merge**

continued from page 1 combatants and submarines at a pace unmatched by any other nation. CSSC and CSIC have been central to this effort, and their unification could streamline production lines for warships, reduce costs, and shorten delivery schedules. Analysts note that this could enhance China's ability to project power in contested waters, including the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait. "This is about more than efficiency, it's about strategic readiness," said Dr. Li Ming, a defense analyst at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies. "A unified shipbuilding giant can respond faster to naval requirements and maintain China's technological edge in maritime defense." Despite its advantages, the merger is not without risks. Integrating two massive bureaucracies could lead to management inefficiencies, and overlapping production facilities may require painful restructuring. Additionally, the new conglomerate will face scrutiny from international regulators, especially in markets sensitive to Chinese industrial

Environmental regulations also loom large. The shipping industry is under mounting pressure to decarbonize, with the International Maritime Organization pushing for net-zero emissions targets. While Chinese yards have made strides in developing greener propulsion systems, they will need to accelerate innovation to meet evolving global standards and retain competitiveness.

For Beijing, the CSSC-CSIC merger is as much a symbolic statement as an industrial policy decision. It signals China's intent to dominate the oceans not only through its growing navy but also through commercial control of global shipping infrastructure. "The message is clear," said Hutton. "China is building the capacity to supply the world's ships and its own for decades to come." As the final contracts are signed and the merger takes shape, competitors and maritime stakeholders around the globe will be watching closely. For an industry that has seen centuries of shifting tides, the rise of a single, state-backed behemoth may mark the beginning of a new era in global shipbuilding.

#### **BUSINESS AGENT'S REPORT**

continued from page 12

dominance.

planning to activate the Maunalei before the end of August.

**SFBP Pier#9** — Chris Auer delegate training continues for the Temporary deckhands to see if they have what it takes to become an Operator.

Many are called few are chosen. Still looking for experienced boat operators that are interested in working for the SFBP.

Contact SFBA Roy Tufono (415) 777-3400 at SUP Headquarters' in San Francisco. Steve Ross Dockbosun.

If your Documents are less than 6 months to expire. It's time to start the renewal process if you need help see your local Agent. Members can call Headquarters to pay your dues over the phone there is a \$5.00 Processing fee added to the transaction.

Help out with dispatching & registration, visited the ships, assist in the front office.

Roy L. Tufono

## **Eternity C Update**

The fate of the crew of the *Eternity C*, a Liberian-flagged bulk carrier sunk in the Red Sea after a series of Houthi attacks in early July, is coming into sharper focus as survivors speak out and new video emerges from the militant group holding several crew members. The *Eternity C* was struck on July 7 and 8, 2025, by a barrage of sea drones, missiles, and small-boat assaults. The violence forced the vessel to abandon ship, and the bulk carrier later sank.

In the immediate aftermath, search teams rescued ten people from the water, eight Filipino sailors, one Indian crew member, and a Greek security guard. Four others, one Russian national and three Filipinos, were confirmed dead. Five more remain missing and are now presumed dead after search operations were formally called off in mid-July. "We've exhausted all viable search efforts," a statement from the vessel's operator, Cosmoship, said. "Our focus now is on the safety, health, and eventual return of the survivors."

Houthi forces are holding at least six Filipino crew members taken from the ship during or after the attack. On July 28, the group released a six-minute video showing ten rescued seafarers, nine Filipinos and the Greek guard, receiving medical care, speaking to family members, and offering reassurances. While Cosmoship expressed "deep relief" at seeing the crew alive, questions remain about the circumstances of the footage. Maritime security analysts caution that such videos can be used for propaganda

and may not reflect the crew's true situation. "This is still a hostage situation," said one European maritime official. "No matter how they appear on camera, these sailors are being held against their will."

The Eternity C incident marks one of the deadliest single attacks on a commercial vessel in the Red Sea since the escalation of Houthi maritime operations. The U.S., U.K., and EU have condemned the assault, while the Philippines has launched diplomatic efforts to secure the release of its citizens. Private search operations by maritime security companies Diaplous and Ambrey scoured the area for more than a week before being halted. Rough seas, debris fields, and hostile waters hindered recovery efforts. Houthi leaders have claimed the attack was retaliation for "aggression" by Israel and its allies, though the *Eternity C* was not involved in military operations. The ship's operators say it was carrying commercial cargo bound for Europe.

The families of the missing and captive sailors remain in limbo. Philippine officials say negotiations are ongoing, but no timeline has been given for a release. Meanwhile, maritime operators are warning of growing risks to global shipping in the Red Sea, with insurance rates and rerouting costs climbing sharply. "This was not just an attack on a ship, it was an attack on the global maritime system," said a senior Greek shipping executive. "And the people paying the highest price are the seafarers."

Monday, August 18, 2025 Page 11

#### SAILORS' UNION OF THE PACIFIC **QUARTERLY FINANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT** FOR THE QUARTER ENDED JUNE 30, 2025

The Quarterly Finance Committee, duly authorized to act by the regular meeting at Headquarters on July 14, 2025 hereby submits the following report:

#### **SUMMARY OF CASH AND INVESTMENTS**

	<u> </u>
TOTAL CASH & INVESTMENTS	\$ 4,687,257.65
STRIKE FUND	1,293,730.99
POLITICAL FUND	11,732.92
GENERAL FUND	\$ 3,381,793.74

#### **GENERAL FUND INCOME**

Dues, Initiation, Assessments	\$ 116,600.00
Interest and Realized Gain (Loss)	41,831.12
Donations - West Coast Sailors	355.00
Joint Committee & Hiring Hall	224,028.25
Advertising & Promotion	35.00

Advertising & Promotion	35.00
Miscellaneous Income	1430.00
Reimbursed Administrative Expenses	31,194.93
Contributions	55.00

Contributions	55.00
TOTAL INCO	WE \$ 416,529.30
EXPENSE	
Transportation Expense	\$ 751.50
Rent	23,947.87
Postage, Printing & Office	2,874.48
Telephone	6,184.16
West Coast Sailors Publishing Expense	16,511.67
Per Capita Taxes	13,183.50
Association Dues	
Salaries & Payroll Taxes	231,501.90
Office Workers Pension	9,597,90

Office Workers Pension	9,597.90
Insurance	66,386.18
Election	
Meeting/Committee & Neg. Conference & Conv.	3,256.84
Investment Expense	2,547.86
Officials Pension	12,645.00
Subscription	

Subscription	
Accounting	12,300.00
Legal	
Advertising & Promotion	660.00
Miscellaneous	1,377.92

TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 403,801.78

75.00

\$ 91,301.03

10.00

\$ 36,872.32

\$ 69,701.23

#### **BUILDING CORPORATION**

Rents

**Bank Charges** 

Miscellaneous Income		
	TOTAL INCOME	\$ 91,301.03
EXPENSE		
<b>Building Services &amp; Utilities</b>		\$ 25,550.46
General Tax Expense		
Office Equipment		939.13
Repairs & Maintenance		346.09
Insurance		
Accounting		8,200.00
Legal		

## **POLITICAL FUND**

**TOTAL EXPENSE** 

#### INCOME

Advertising & Promotion

Contributions	TOTAL INCOME	\$ 2,545.00 <b>\$ 2,545.0</b> 0
EXPENSE		

**NET INCOME(LOSS)** 

EXPENSE		
Contributions		_
CA Filing Fee		-
	TOTAL EXPENSE	_

Phillip Coulter BK#4824, Norhaslan Idris BK#888, James Linderman BK#4126, Noel Itsumaru BK#886, Colin Dewey BK#2741





#### READY RESERVE FORCE



## **Michigan Maritime School Owner Admits Falsifying Captain's Credentials**

Mel Stackpoole, 62, former owner and chief instructor of Great Lakes Charter Training, pleaded guilty in federal court to fraudulently certifying unqualified mariners. Stackpoole admitted to altering and falsifying course records and documents with the intent to thwart the U.S. Coast Guard's oversight. In a plea entered on August 12, before U.S. District Judge Terrence G. Berg, Stackpoole acknowledged that in August 2020 he delivered fewer than 50 hours of classroom instruction for his Master 100-Ton Captain's Course, far short of the mandated 80-hour requirement. He also directed students to falsify their prior sea service, medical histories, and recreational drug use on applications for merchant mariner credentials.

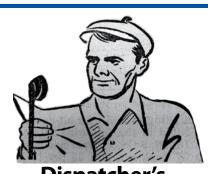
Prosecutors further revealed that Stackpoole supplied students with examination answers, altered incorrect responses to correct ones, and inflated failing scores to passing grades. He then issued completion certificates that falsely attested students' course success, submitting them to the Coast Guard as legitimate.

U.S. Attorney Jerome F. Gorgon Jr. sharply condemned the misconduct, stating, "Mel Stackpoole has endangered the safety of everyone who uses the waterways of our Great Lakes by deliberately circumnavigating the Coast Guard's training and certification protocols and facilitating the issuance of credentials to unskilled and unqualified mariners." Captain Richard Armstrong, Commander of U.S. Coast Guard Sector Detroit, echoed the sentiment, stressing that "Integrity is the cornerstone of our maritime profession. When that trust is broken, it jeopardizes individual careers and the safety and security of our waterways." Special Agent in Charge Josh Packer of the Coast Guard Investigative Service added that this case underscores the agency's commitment to pursue individuals who exploit maritime training systems.

Stackpoole's sentencing is scheduled for December 18, 2025, when he faces a statutory maximum of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The investigation was led jointly by the U.S. Coast Guard and its Investigative Service. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy J. Wyse and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Corinne M. Lambert.

This case represents the latest in a series of crackdowns on fraudulent mariner certificates in the United States. Previous cases include a 2021 Virginia Beach incident where Lamont Godfrey was sentenced to 45 months in prison for creating counterfeit certificates from the Mid-Atlantic Maritime Academy. That conspiracy netted over \$394,000 in profits and involved more than 252 mariners purchasing fraudulent qualifications.

In another case from October 2022, former United States Coast Guard employees Dorothy Smith and Eldridge Johnson were sentenced to five and six years imprisonment respectively for a bribery scheme at a Coast Guard exam center in Mandeville, LA, where they falsified records for merchant mariners who hadn't actually completed required examinations.



## Dispatcher's Report **Headquarters** — July 2025

Deck
Bosun4
Carpenter0
MM2
AB19
OS0
Standby S.F 16
Total Deck Jobs Shipped41
Total Deck B, C & D Shipped30
Engine/Steward
QMED0
Pumpman 0
Oiler 0
Wiper0
Steward0
Cook0
Messman0
Total E&S Jobs Shipped 0
Total E&S B, C, & D Shipped0
Total Jobs Shipped-All Depts41
Total B, C, & D Shipped-All Depts.30
Total Registered "A"27
Total Registered "B"26
Total Registered "C"12
Total Registered "D"21

## **SUP BRANCH REPORTS**

## Honolulu

**July 2025** 

**SHIPPING:** The following jobs were dispatched for the month: 1 Bosun Steady, 3 AB Day steady, 1 AB Day Return, 4 AB Watch steady, 1 AB Watch Return, 1 USNS AB, 1 GUDE, and 1 USNS Ordinary.

There were 8 Standbys Jobs dispatched for the month.

**REGISTERED:** 12 A-Cards, 14 B-Cards, 3 C-Cards, and 3 D-Cards.

SHIPS CHECKED: USNS Charlton, APL Oceania, APL Islander, D.K. Inouye, Manulani, Lurline, Kaimana Hila, Mahimahi, Manoa, Maunawili, Matsonia, and the Paint & Rigging Gang all running smooth, with few if any beefs.

#### **Agent's Report**

Please make time to attend your union meeting. It's the first time in a long time we couldn't get a quorum. Meeting are the usually the third Monday of the month and notices are posted the week prior, and are always posted in the West Coast Sailor.

The Summer Suitcase Parade is under way and there's no better time to sail than

in the summer.

If you have taken the Basic IGF Code Operations aka LNG training. It's crucial that you get the LNG endorsement in your MMC. The certificate alone will not work. If you need help. Come see me.

Word on the street is there are going to be few candidates who plan on running against Anti Jones Act incumbent Congressman Ed Case. I will keep you posted as things develop. Ed Case has been working against the interest of maritime workers in Hawaii since the 90's, and any candidate running against Case who is Pro Maritime / Jones Act, should be worthy of our attention. Personally, I'd vote for a sardine sandwich over the congressman for district 1.

If you have six months or less to go before your documents are set to expire. It's time to begin the renewal process. Always here to help, if needed.

> Fraternally Submitted, Patrick Max Weisbarth Honolulu Branch Agent

## WILMINGTON

July 2025

**Shipping:** Bosun: 5 AB/W 11 AB/D, 8 OS/STOS, 7 GVA/GUDE 0, Standby: 50. Total Jobs Shipped: 81

**Registrations:** A 38, B 35, C 6, D 3.

**Ships Visited:** Making regular visits as time permits me Also keeping in contact by phone and email.

#### Agent's Report

Shipping in LA is buzzing right now. If you're looking for work, swing by and get yourself registered. I've been flooded with calls about standby gigs and yeah, we've got them. But let me tell you, it's a serious dogfight out there, heavy competition, mostly from A & B guys, with A's usually running the show. But listen, fortune favors the bold, you won't know

if you don't show up. Grab these Patriot jobs while they're still Plentiful, you've probably heard the chatter about RRF going around. Do not miss the getting while it is here. And don't forget to hit up our monthly meetings to stay in the loop on union issues and maritime news. Can't make the meetings? West Coast Sailors paper is always online for updates. There's a current Do Not Ship list hanging in the hall, keep those dues paid to stay off it. And always double-check your documentation, it's crucial out there. Keep your head o

Fraternally Submitted, Leo Martinez, Book #19362 Wilmington Port Agent

## **SEATTLE**

**July 2025** 

Shipping:2 Navy AB (A, D); 2 AB/D (A, B); 2 AB/W (B); 3 OS (B); 1 GVA (D); 1 GUDE (D) 3 Standy AB (B)

**Registered:** 9 A card for a total of 13; 8 B card for a total of 11; 7 C card for a total of 9; 4 D card for a total of 3

#### **Agent's Report**

Seattle assigned *Cape Taylor* called for a full crew to take her out of shipyard to return to Beaumont. Five AB's, an OS, three Oilers, and a Wiper were ordered. In a historically poor showing of the membership this hall was only able to fill the OS job, and the other halls had to cover our work. Really? There was a time in the not so distant past that Seattle members would crew all three Cape T's in a matter of days. We need to do better when we're called out for necessary work.

Fraternally, Brandon Bohannon Seattle Port Agent

**Sudoku** is fun to play, and the rules are simple. Fill in the blanks so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers 1 through 9.

	4	1	9		7	5		2
			5	1	8	4		6
6							7	
	7					8		
	9		1		3		2	
		8					4	
	3							5
2		6	3	7	5			
9		5	4		6	7	1	

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**July 2025** 

I went to the Bloody Thursday meeting at ILWU hall in San Francisco, in remembrance of the July 5, 1934 Strike where protestors were shot and killed. We need our members to recognize the importance of this memorial as it's a reflection of ourselves and the labor rights we have today. Bloody Thursday remains a somber reminder of the struggles faced by workers in their fight for dignity and fair treatment in the workplace.

*Allied Pacific* — David Pelczmann, delegate. Ship is on a UNREP mission in Australia. Arturo Orcino, Bosun.

*USNS Seay* — Jeffrey Baccay, Delegate. Ship is underway in route to Boston for quick repair. Once repair is complete loading up cargo and heading to Saipan. Kevin Stewart, Bosun.

*USNS Sisler* — Noel Romero, Delegate. Sisler is preparing to get underway heading to Gwangyang to repair generators, offload scrap metals and Hazmat. Then, heading back to Chin — Hae for another engine repair. Bosun is keeping deck gang busy with projects on deck. No beefs, and gang is getting at least 42 hours OT per pay period. Chris Cupan, Bosun.

*USNS Dahl* — Shoal Nervo, Delegate. Operations are going well on the Dahl. The assistant D.P. is currently staying onboard the vessel. Averaging 2.5 hours of overtime per day. The engineers have had issues with the houses AC and airflow for well over a month. Regardless, deck gang maintaining good spirits and mission readiness. Perciverando Quiteles, Bosun.

*USNS Soderman* — Gabriel Moreno, Delegate. Crew has been hard at work with inventory and repairs. It was challenging task to get ship ready for sea trial. Fortunately, SUP gang came through with successful readiness and Hagglund crane operational experience. For now, Watkins is on standby ready. Expecting Watkins alongside in the coming months. Gonzalo Sarra, Bosun.

*USNS Red Cloud* — Jason Alonzo, Delegate. Red Cloud underway for Corpus Christi to load up cargo. Looking forward to upcoming mission to Europe. Nice weather, no beefs, getting work done. Great steward department, mariners eating well. For time being Red Cloud remaining FOS through 2025. Mohan Gandy, Bosun.

**All mariners,** When you get off a vessel, get a reconstructed drug card, update your medical certificate if its STCW date is expiring (top left), <u>catch up on your dues</u>, fill out a training application so we can get your certs up to date, and file for supplemental benefits.

Sam Worth

## **BUSINESS AGENT'S REPORT**

**July 2025** 

APL calls Gangway Security for their vessels once or twice a week, The watches are maintained from time of arrival and for duration of the vessels stay in port.

**President Monroe** — In at Oakland#56 delegate Joe Eckert we had good weather, We were able to work both ways on the crossing over. The watch standers are making good \$ on here . The steward's department needs to step — up on Menu and order enough stores to last the trip. Not continually running out of provisions. Other than that little to no issue's on here all is good, getting the work done SUP Style running smooth with Jose Duran Jr. as Bosun.

**President Reagan** — delegate Javier Rosales ship made good time up the coast arrived early in Oakland. Ships on schedule to sail Wednesday morning @ 04:00. Last trip had good weather in our favor, Bosun keeps us busy with maintenance work and other odd jobs needing attention. All is well on here a good hard-working deck gang getting the work done. In good hands and running like clockwork with Brain Burn as Serang.

**President JQ Adams** — In at Oakland#56 delegate Edward Hervias good to see our SUP Gangway security show up on arrival, ship scheduled to departed for Yokohama early tomorrow morning. This is a good ship top to bottom the deck gang is happy with little or no beefs as far as overtime is involved the doors wide open working steady everyday so far so good. Bosun is able take care of certain jobs or projects that are hard to do while in port. Sahr Ali as Bosun.

President LB Johnson, President Grant...vessel's check in with little or no beefs.

**Agents Report:** Shipping is slow for those who are picky. Jobs hanging on the board for days at a time. We need participators NOT spectators when the bill collectors are calling or emailing you. They don't care if you worked for Matson, APL, or Patriot, they just want you to pay up. Ordinaries with enough time to apply for RFPNW to become a STO's Special Trained Ordinary will be able to be dispatched to a APL vessels as STO'S. Especially now with Patriot contract services eliminating entry level rating GVA's and GUDE's this is very devastating to our members and to the industry.

Members that are eligible for IGF Code Basic (LNG, Original) classes are available see your Local agent to fill out a training application to submit to Berit.

*Mahimahi* — Oakland#62 delegate Dennis Sumague taking over the sheets back from his trips — off. Pick up where I left off Penny Pinching chief mate trying to make a name for himself or trying to get a steady job. This is what it feels to be on a foreign flag ship. Isnin Idris as Bosun.

*Manoa* — Paul Harseny delegate arrived at Oakland Headquarters had no Qualified members to take the Bosun relief for Cody Clark .In this case this is where shipping rule#15 comes into effect the Union dispatched Luis Rosas who is aboard as Steady AB/W to Bosun for 3 trips, Once those three trips are completed he will revert back to AB/W and finish his time as watch stander.

*Kamokuiki* — Jerome Pope via cell phone reports departed Singapore for Deigo Garcia due to arrive Saturday the 16th, The schedule has us on the island for a few days then back to Singapore. Topside talking about making a trip to Guam this charter is up in September. There's a good chance Matson could pick up another charter and continue to run, If not ship will lay-up September in Malaysia which is always subject to change. Other than that, uncertain we are working every day overtime is wide open unlimited we are making good \$ on here with Robert Reed as Bosun.

**Mokihana** and **Maunalei** —both laid -up Oakland Outer harbor#23. Matson is continued on page 10