



July 3, 2024

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U.S. Maritime Administration
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Re: MWWG Inquiry

Dear Dr. Kumar:

During our Maritime Workforce Working Group meeting of Wednesday, June 12, you asked the participants to comment on HR 2670 (National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024), Section 3534, subsection (d)(5) which reads:

(5) Assessing the effect on the United States merchant marine and United States Merchant Marine Academy if graduates from State maritime academies and the United States Merchant Marine Academy were assigned to, or required to fulfill, certain maritime positions based on the overall needs of the United States merchant marine.

Please be advised that the undersigned labor organizations and working group participants that represent licensed deck, marine engineering officers and unlicensed personal are adamantly opposed to any suggestion that graduates from the State Maritime Academies and the United States Merchant Marine Academy might be assigned to, or required to fulfill, certain maritime positions based on the overall needs of the United States merchant marine.

While the undersigned unions recognize and support the need for service commitments to the United States merchant marine in exchange for the educational support and resulting employment opportunities that may be available, it must be up to the individual regarding with which employer and how they fulfill such requirements. Involuntary assignment to "certain maritime positions" could lead certain marine employers to lower employment standards by exploiting a pool of conscripted labor. This approach would likely create a race to the bottom and deter potential mariners from pursuing careers in the industry.

Best regards,

William Barrere, AMO

Jason Callahan, MEBA

Dave Connolly, SUP

Dave Heindel, SIU

Don Marcus, MM&P

Anthony Poplawski, MFOU