RESOLUTIONS

2013 CONVENTION

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Maritime Transportation Delivers

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CONGRESSIONAL MARITIME CAUCUS

It is not an overstatement to say that over the past four years, nearly every maritime program has come under attack. You name it, special interest groups have sought to repeal the program or to underfund it: the Jones Act, PL-480 “Food for Peace” Program, dredging, the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, the Maritime Security Program, Title XI Shipbuilding Loan Guarantee Program, cargo preference – the list goes on.

Given these tumultuous times, two of the industry’s strongest friends on Capitol Hill (one a Democrat, the other a Republican) announced the formation of the Congressional Maritime Caucus. Both Representatives Michael Grimm (R-NY) and Cedric Richmond (D-LA) spoke at the 2012 MTD Executive Board Meeting. Both are highly appreciated and respected throughout the industry, management and labor alike.

Since its formation in February, the Congressional Maritime Caucus has played a pivotal role in fighting back attacks on the maritime industry. More than anything else, the Caucus has been a moving force in educating members of Congress—many of them who have been on Capitol Hill for only a few years—about maritime’s many contributions.

As Rep. Richmond noted shortly after the formation of the Caucus, “The maritime industry is the unsung hero of our nation’s economy. From Alaska to Puerto Rico, Louisiana to New York, every day this industry facilitates trade and delivers energy resources that support millions of jobs and pays billions in state and federal taxes every year. I also look forward to highlighting the role other industries play in supporting maritime commerce, be it in the fields of law, engineering, shipbuilding or insurance.”

Rep. Grimm added, “The maritime industry is at the heart of New York City’s economic vitality – from our thriving shipping industry to the Staten Island Ferry. As the representative of Staten Island and Brooklyn, I am proud to have the New York Container Terminal in my district that employs hundreds of hard-working men and women. I am honored to co-chair the Congressional Maritime Caucus with Rep. Richmond, and look forward to working with him in support of issues that matter most to our nation’s maritime industry.”
Since its formation, the Caucus has grown to encompass some two dozen House members. Moreover, it has been in contact with pro-maritime senators to coordinate legislative strategies.

In fighting for the rights of maritime workers everywhere and for the important economic and national security interests that the industry generates, Representatives Grimm and Richmond have urged maritime labor to get out the facts about the industry. The MTD, our affiliates and our Port Maritime Councils know the powerful truth behind their challenge. Unless we heed their words, there will be no industry left to defend. And something essential to American defense, the American economy and indeed, the American experience will have died.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils give a strong thank-you to the members of the Congressional Maritime Caucus for understanding the importance of the maritime industry and the federal programs that the industry supports. We pledge to work with the Caucus to fight for the industry’s enhancement. Moreover, we will continue our grassroots campaign to get the word out about the important benefits that the US-flag maritime industry generates.
FAIRNESS AT PATRIOT

(Submitted by the United Mine Workers of America)

Since the 1970s, federal bankruptcy laws have been rewritten to benefit financiers and bankers at the expense of workers. When companies (and as we have seen recently, municipalities) declare they are bankrupt, workers and retirees are the last to be considered when any remaining assets are made available. The very men and women who came to work every day and played by the rules are seeing all that they toiled for being whisked away because the balance of justice has become weighed against them.

Our brothers and sisters in the airline industries, at Hostess Brands and in the city of Detroit are among the tens of thousands of workers wondering what happened to their job and retirement security. They had signed collectively bargained contracts; they met their obligations. Yet, their employers ran to the federal courts asking to be relieved of the obligations to which they had committed.

Add to this tragic list the plight of the Mine Workers caught up in the bankruptcy of Patriot Coal.

For decades, the UMWA negotiated not just wages and working conditions, but also health care security for retired miners. Union members would defer larger wage and pension packages, increased vacation time and other benefits in exchange for greater control over workplace health and safety, and the promise of guaranteed lifetime health care. They did this because they knew the toll their profession took from their bodies. Such health benefits would be provided to the member, the member’s spouse, dependent children to the age of 22 and dependent children with a disability for life.

In 2005, Arch Coal joined with outside investors to create Magnum Coal. Arch moved its $400 million obligation for retiree health care to Magnum. Then, in 2007, Peabody Coal – the world’s largest coal producer – spun off Patriot. Peabody saddled Patriot with nearly $600 million in obligations for retiree health care owed to its employees, retirees and their families. In
both instances, none of the retirees caught up in these transactions ever worked one day for either Magnum or Patriot.

Patriot purchased Magnum in 2008. At that point, the company had compiled more than $1.3 billion in obligations. More than 90% of Patriot’s retirement obligations were owed to retirees and their widows who never worked a single day for the company. On top of all this, Patriot was run, at first, by former Peabody executives.

Last year, Patriot Coal declared bankruptcy. It sought to rid itself of its retiree health and pension obligations, calling them “unsustainable labor-related liabilities.” The UMWA fought this effort by pointing out that Peabody and Arch used this scheme to walk away from decades of contractual agreements to its workers.

The UMWA launched a series of protests outside Peabody’s St. Louis headquarters and in the coal towns of West Virginia, Kentucky and Indiana to call public attention to the situation. Many MTD affiliates have taken part in these actions with some of their members going to jail in support of the Mine Workers. The MTD Executive Board approved a statement of support at its February meeting.

In May, a St. Louis-based U.S. Bankruptcy Court ruled Patriot had the authority to reject its collective bargaining agreement and modify its covenant regarding retiree health care. In the ruling, the judge stated, “Unions generally try to bargain for the best deal for their members, however, there is likely some responsibility to be absorbed for demanding benefits that the employer cannot realistically fund in perpetuity.”

The Judge’s ruling missed the fact that that the UMWA negotiated these benefits with companies that were not in bankruptcy – Peabody and Arch. Her ruling also reminds us that federal bankruptcy law allows companies like Patriot to cast aside legal collectively bargained agreements, AND the system places blame upon unions for bargaining well for their membership. The Patriot decision could affect as many as 22,000 active members, retirees, dependents and widows.

The UMWA continues to work with Patriot Coal as well as within the legal system to obtain what is fair and deserved for its members. As President Cecil Roberts has declared at the many rallies in support of those affected
by Patriot’s actions: “If Peabody, Arch and Patriot can get away with this, then no retiree’s collectively bargained health care or pension is safe in America!”

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils continue to stand in solidarity with the United Mine Workers of America in support of the brothers and sisters affected by Patriot Coal’s bankruptcy, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils work with elected officials to change the nation’s bankruptcy laws to better protect the workers who through no fault of their own are left without promised pensions, health care and other contracted benefits.
FIRST RESPONDERS

The skill, courage and dedication of first responders have attracted nearly universal praise. Indeed, just in the previous 12 months we have seen first responders make a profound difference in a number of widely publicized disasters such as:

- The 19 Arizona fire fighters who died trying to contain a raging wildfire;
- The police officers, doctors, medics and others who attended to the injured and helped restore calm and safety in the wake of the Boston Marathon bombing;
- The cabin crew, police officers, emergency medical technicians, doctors, fire fighters and hospital employees who, through their timely and skilled response, held the loss of life to a minimum in the wake of the crash of a Korean jetliner in San Francisco; and
- The thousands of public employees, utility workers and more who still are helping residents of the East Coast recover from Superstorm Sandy.

These first responders have captured the imagination of the American public. But to anyone familiar with political and legislative developments over the past four years since the MTD’s last convention, many of the seemingly heartfelt words of appreciation ring hollow.

We have witnessed a relentless attack on collective bargaining rights at the state and local levels, including those benefitting first responders. Men and women who are sworn to serve and protect their communities are seeing elected officials voting to cut pay and benefits, reduce pensions and eliminate jobs as a way to deal with the economic hardship faced since 2008. In other words, do more with and for less.

And for those who already have retired from years of public service – Detroit comes to mind – federal bankruptcy laws are allowing government entities to renege on years of contracted agreements to reduce or eliminate promised benefits and pensions.
Another example is the decade-long fight to secure compensation and health care benefits for first responders and workers who became ill after being exposed to pollutants in the wreckage of New York’s World Trade Center following the attack of September 11, 2001. After tributes praised their bravery and dedication came years of bluster and blockage of legislation designed to help those harmed and recovering.

John Stewart, the talk show host/comedian, spoke for many when he said that not enacting such a bill “is an outrageous abdication of our responsibility to those who were most heroic on 9/11.”

The AFL-CIO and a united phalanx of MTD-affiliated unions, many of whom represent first responders, kept the issue in the public eye. Finally, justice was done.

But more needs to be done for all first responders. Organized labor is united in its iron-clad commitment to highlight the efforts of these dedicated and selfless workers. Moreover, the MTD remains committed to advocating for legislation that will make the jobs of these workers safer.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils urge elected officials to go beyond mere platitudes by providing for and enacting legislation that will improve the lives of America’s heroic first responders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils strongly oppose efforts to rob these workers of their innate and legitimate right to bargain collectively; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils thank all the women and men who serve their communities as first responders, and recognize their families who await their safe return home after each and every shift.
FOOD FOR PEACE

The American maritime industry’s recent victory in Congress protecting the Food for Peace program from disastrous cuts is a deservedly popular topic during this convention. And while the political machinations behind Food for Peace (also known as PL-480) offer many lessons and reminders, we should not overlook the factors that make the program worth fighting for.

The MTD makes no apologies whatsoever for protecting the good American jobs tied to PL-480, including many that are held by members of our affiliated unions. An estimated 44,000 American mariners, port workers, farmers, transportation workers and processors have jobs that depend on the program. If you count other domestic jobs related to Food for Peace, that number swells to around 100,000.

Food for Peace is a proven, time-tested winner that helps people around the world, puts America in a good light and literally saves lives.

As reported by the coalition USA Maritime, although funding is at its lowest point in years, the need for Food for Peace is greater than ever. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 12 million metric tons of commodities are needed each year to fill food gaps in the 70 most “food-insecure” countries. The number of hungry people has increased to 925 million from 833 million at the end of 2002, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

In many cases, Food for Peace is the difference between life and death. And the program has served an essential role in helping stabilize countries, support foreign policy, and build important trade links for our farmers in countries like India, Poland, Romania, and Egypt.

We have said it before but it bears repeating: Food for Peace is not just a handout. It’s the sharing of American bounty and American know-how to help rescue those less fortunate from starvation and chronic food shortages. By creating a uniquely sustainable public-private partnership between American faith-based organizations, U.S. industry, and the U.S. government, Food for Peace leverages private and public resources to make a meaningful difference for millions of people in a way that government alone simply cannot.
Moreover, our military leaders have pointed out that the availability of food aid cargoes is essential to maintaining the U.S. merchant fleet, and therefore essential to maintaining our national defense sealift capability. In the MTD, we know this to be true, and we agree with high-profile assessments that any decrease in food aid tonnage would have to be compensated for elsewhere in order to maintain that capability and keep those ships sailing.

The bottom line is that PL-480 works. Replacing the existing program with direct cash payments to foreign countries or non-governmental organizations – as proposed by some – would be imprudent at best, but we’d describe it in stronger terms, such as: foolish, wasteful, and disastrous. Such a move would wipe out American jobs, remove accountability, and undoubtedly harm the people in other nations whose lives literally depend on the sustenance the program provides. As one congressman so aptly put it during a hearing earlier this year, we’re much more confident in the likelihood of a 50-pound bag of food ending up in the right hands than a 50-pound bag of money.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils fully stand behind the Food for Peace program, and unconditionally reject any further erosion of it, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils will continue working to not only preserve the current program but also restore it to proper funding levels that were in place before cuts took place in recent years. We know the fight isn’t finished and we’ll keep pushing for as long as it takes.
GRASSROOTS INVOLVEMENT

For those of us in the labor movement, grassroots political activity is like oxygen: If it went away, we’d go away.

Never was that point clearer than this past summer, when the American maritime industry pulled together and gained enough support to defeat a Congressional amendment that could have wiped out tens of thousands of U.S. jobs, many of which are held by union members. This particular amendment involved the Food for Peace Program or PL-480, and we were up against the White House, members of Congress, major editorial boards across the country and several high-powered special-interest groups who wanted to sink us.

We won, and the key to victory was good old-fashioned grassroots action. Our members contacted their elected representatives in D.C. Our organizations – unions and businesses alike – took our pro-worker, pro-America message directly to Capitol Hill. Significantly, we earned strong bipartisan support, proving once again that our issues matter on both sides of the aisle, and our loyalties lie with those who support America’s working families, regardless of political party.

Of course, this is just one example, albeit a significant one. Every day, we’re still fighting political battles over so-called right-to-work laws, comp-time legislation, paycheck deception, project labor agreements, retirement security, and the list goes on. And although we know we can’t triumph every time, like the old lottery slogan says, we’ve got to play to win.

In this same vein, our grassroots efforts must and will extend to election seasons at every level of government. Once again, electing pro-worker representatives doesn’t guarantee success, but we all know what happens when anti-worker, anti-union governors and senators and congressmen take office. It’s a never-ending cycle and a never-ending mission, but it’s the system we’ve got.

As anyone who’s participated in a phone bank or done a precinct walk or handed out political flyers knows, grassroots action isn’t glamorous. A lot of it is behind the scenes. It involves sacrifice and it comes with no assurance
of winning. It often takes long hours. Heady photo ops at the Capitol or the White House are very much the exception.

Clearly, the MTD understands all of these truths. We can compare it to a brand new American-flag ship that looks beautiful from the outside but that won’t be able to sail without everything properly in place down below in the engine room. Without sustained, effective grassroots involvement, our movement would hit the rocks.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils recognize the importance of grassroots action to America’s working families, and we will continue to treat such activities with utmost urgency, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils will promote trade unionism in every possible way, including educating the American public and political representatives at every level of government.
IMPROVING MARITIME LABOR CONDITIONS

Maritime, by its very nature, is one of the most international of all U.S. industries. Since its inception, the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO has been active in international forums in order to achieve one of our primary goals, which is to improve working and living conditions for civilian mariners.

One of the most important of those institutions is the International Labor Organization (ILO), the agency within the United Nations (UN) dedicated to improving labor conditions. The ILO is highly respected. In 1969, for example, it received the Nobel Peace Prize for “improving peace among classes, pursuing justice for workers and providing technical assistance to developing nations.” One hundred and eighty-five of the UN’s 192 member nations participate in its deliberations.

Unfortunately, there are many in Congress who believe that the United States should refrain from participating in any UN activity. Earlier this year, for example, a determined minority in the Senate was able to derail approval of an ILO convention that seeks to establish minimum standards in regards to the disabled. The convention is modeled after the widely-heralded law that former President George H. W. Bush submitted and a Democratic Congress approved. But even though the convention would have brought world standards in line with those in the United States, it was rejected for one reason and one reason only: the ILO is a UN agency.

The incident received widespread attention because former Senator Robert Dole, a disabled World War II veteran, was on the floor of the Senate in order to celebrate what many thought would be a sure thing: approval of the treaty. But to the dismay of many, the treaty failed to get the needed votes. News shows were filled with images of the disappointed war hero sitting in his wheelchair on the floor of the Senate not quite believing what had happened.

More than most, maritime workers have reason to regret this state of affairs. For years, the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils have championed a proposed ILO Convention that many are calling a “bill of rights for seafarers.” Provisions in the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) include:
• An employment agreement guaranteeing decent shipboard working and living conditions that would be signed by both the mariner and the shipowner (or its representative);
• Wording that mandates monthly payment in full and in accordance with the employment agreement and any applicable collective bargaining agreement;
• A 14-hour work limit within any 24-hour period, as well as a 72-hour limit within any seven-day period;
• A requirement that shipowners must pay to repatriate mariners in cases of illness, injury, shipwreck, insolvency the sale of the vessel;
• Specific requirements outlining livable accommodations including appropriate recreational facilities aboard a vessel;
• Access to prompt medical care when on board or in port, and
• Measures for effective enforcement and compliance of this Convention, including a certification system for labor standards.

The Convention tackles what has been a chronic problem in the international maritime industry: conditions aboard many flag-of-convenience (FOC) vessels and those of other substandard registries. The MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils have been fighting these often unsafe and demeaning conditions for decades. It has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) in seeking to make this a reality.

But this is one story that has a happy ending.

To come into force, the MLC had to be ratified by at least 30 member nations (which occurred last year) and by flag-states whose total share in the world gross tonnage of ships equaled 33 percent (which happened in 2009). The MLC went into effect on August 20, 2013.

As is the case with the international bill of rights for the disabled, the international bill of rights for seafarers will not impose any noncompetitive obligations on American transportation services. U.S.-flag shipping companies already contribute their fair share of the tax load and meet stringent health, safety, labor and environmental standards.

However, still outstanding is ratification of the Seafarers’ Identity Document Convention (Revised) (No. 185) which calls upon nations to use state-of-
the-art technology to verify the identity of mariners documented by their countries. Such documents would be audited every five years, and would eliminate the need for visas when taking shore leave.

While Canada has signed on, the United States still has not.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department will continue to work with its allies in the international maritime community and in international forums to improve conditions for civilian mariners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils continue to urge Congress to ratify both the Maritime Labor Convention and the Seafarers’ Identity Document Convention (Revised) (No. 185).
IN MEMORIAM

As we in the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO plan for our future, it is important that we take time to remember and honor those who have helped make the Department what it is today. Any and all success that we in the North American maritime industry and labor movement have had in enhancing the rights and job security of workers is due to the contributions of those who came before us.

Since we last met in convention, we have lost many good friends and co-workers: Among those for whom we mourn are:

**Mark Ayers** – former President of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department.

**John Bowers** – former President of the International Longshoremen’s Association and MTD Executive Board Member.

**Abe Breehey** – former Legislative Director for the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers.

**Daniel Inouye** – former U.S. Senator from Hawaii and maritime supporter.

**Charles W. Jones** – former International President of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers.

**Byron Kelley** – former Secretary-Treasurer of the Michigan Maritime Trades Port Council.

**Frank Lautenberg** – former U.S. Senator from New Jersey and maritime supporter.

**Rene Lioeanjie** – former President of the National Maritime Union.

**Arthur Moore** – former General President of the Sheet Metal Workers International Association and MTD Executive Board Member.
Jose “Joe” Perez – former official with the Port Maritime Council of Greater New Orleans and Vicinity.

Ronnie Raspberry – former President of the West Gulf Ports Council.

Howard Richardson – former Vice President of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union and MTD Executive Board Member.

Thomas Soresi – former Seafarer and Sergeant-at-Arms for MTD gatherings.

Gordon Spencer – former official and lobbyist for the American Maritime Officers.

Ted Stevens – former U.S. Senator from Alaska and maritime supporter.
When the MTD last met in convention, the national economy already was spiraling downward, but most delegates probably believed that by now, things would be greatly improved.

That’s not to say we’re always optimistic, but the can-do spirit of trade unionists past and present tends to attract people who see the glass as half-full.

Four years later, and five years into the recession, we remain both cautiously optimistic about putting more Americans back to work, and also realistic about what it will take to achieve this most important goal.

Our bottom line is that measures must be taken to make sure that every American who wants a job can get one. We agree with previously proposed plans, including the joint one from the AFL-CIO and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that would boost U.S. manufacturing by building factories here, not overseas.

But even the clearest, most logical blueprints don’t have a prayer unless Congress puts aside its partisan bickering, stalling, and sandbagging, and instead works towards tangible and effective solutions to this great crisis. The obstructionism that took place during the first Obama administration has only gotten worse because of anti-worker legislators and the corporations that have their, um, ears.

Fortunately, the vast majority of the American people see it the same way we do: Jobs and the economy are jointly the number one issue across the nation.

We can win this fight. We can turn things around.

A great first step will be to stop rewarding companies that send jobs overseas. And that starts by changing the focus of our national economic policy from one of maximizing the competitiveness and profitability of corporations that only maintain headquarters somewhere on U.S. territory to one of maximizing the competitiveness and prosperity of the human beings who live and work in America.
Note that we didn’t say companies don’t have the right to turn a profit. We know that America’s working families can’t succeed unless their employers are doing well. But U.S. businesses still can make money by keeping their production here. And despite rumors to the contrary, we do still have a national economy, not just a global one.

For the record, please note that we don’t have any interest in protectionism, and MTD unions in particular undoubtedly appreciate the importance of having imports and exports to ship. But it’s like the instructions you receive on an airplane, when they’re explaining how to use the oxygen masks – you’d better get yourself squared away first, or you won’t be able to help anyone else.

In encouraging domestic investment and laying a stronger and more stable foundation for long-term growth, it is essential that we also tackle the problems of wage stagnation and economic inequality. This will mean changing our labor laws so that all workers who want to form a union and bargain collectively have a fair opportunity to do so. What it also means is making full employment the top goal of our economic policy. We can do that by, in part, shrinking the trade deficit and eliminating incentives for offshoring.

Once again, we’re not talking about doing economic harm to other countries. We instead want to make it easier for them to rely on domestic incomes as sources of growth. A key to that step is establishing suitable minimum standards for the global economy, stopping the race to the bottom, and in the process, creating new markets for American manufacturing.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils see jobs and the economy as the number-one issue today in America, and we remain committed to securing, promoting and protecting good jobs here at home, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils wholeheartedly recognize that a resurgence of the labor movement is critical to restoring the middle class and getting the economy working for millions more people. Study after study has shown that unions
are good for workers and good for employers, due to increased productivity, lower turnover, higher morale and greater accountability. Government data shows that union members earn a better living, and that translates into more money that goes back into the economy, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils remain 100 percent committed to ensuring that the American Dream will not and does not fall further and further out of reach.
THE JONES ACT

The Jones Act is the lifeblood of the maritime industry and a vital tool in protecting the nation’s economic and national security.

This is common knowledge among the MTD, its affiliates, the U.S. military and a bipartisan contingent of American lawmakers. Unfortunately, it is not common knowledge outside that group. In fact, there are some – fueled with misinformation and funded by foreign-flag, anti-worker interests – who would like to undo the Jones Act and the benefits that come with it.

Those benefits are many. The Jones Act, which mandates that cargo moving between U.S. ports must be carried on vessels that are flagged, built, crewed and owned American, sustains more than 500,000 American jobs and generates more than $100 billion in annual economic output. It also provides nearly $30 billion in annual wages and contributes more than $11 billion in tax revenue to the country.

Recent reports also have outlined the benefits of the Jones Act. A report by the non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) on the Jones Act’s impact on Puerto Rico dispelled the myth that the law is harmful to consumers and leads to higher shipping costs. Instead, the GAO study found there were considerable reductions in shipping costs and determined, “The (Jones Act) has helped to ensure reliable, regular service between the United States and Puerto Rico – service that is important to the Puerto Rican economy.”

Another report by the Lexington Institute, a non-profit, non-partisan think tank, has affirmed the Jones Act’s importance to national security. That report found the Jones Act helps protect American interests at home and abroad by helping ensure the nation has a strong force of merchant mariners ready to answer their country’s call to duty anytime, anywhere.

Time and time again the U.S. government has called on the nation’s merchant mariners to support their country in times of war or crisis and those mariners have answered that call without fail. Not having such a cadre of well-trained, loyal U.S. mariners would be dangerous and potentially disastrous in times of crisis.
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils recognize the importance of the Jones Act to the maritime industry and the country’s economic and national security and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils will promote the Jones Act in every possible way, including educating the American public, elected officials and political leaders about the law’s significance and benefits and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils will continue to support the Jones Act in every arena and oppose all efforts to repeal or dismantle the law in any way.
LABOR UNDER ATTACK

There is a direct correlation between the stability of union membership and America’s middle class. When union membership is growing, the middle class gains financially. Similarly, when union membership decreases, the middle class suffers at the same downward rate.

We know this – and so do those at the highest levels of America’s economic strata.

That is why we have witnessed such a determined, unrelenting attack on the rights of working people since we last met in convention four years ago. When a state as sacred in union lore as Michigan can fall under the siren song of those who call themselves “job creators” rather than fall back on generations of family and neighborhood knowledge about how solidarity improved workers’ lives, then we must fight back with everything we have to save the middle class and decent jobs.

After years of attacks by the moneyed-interests on work-provided health benefits and retirement security, they have now mounted frontal assaults in the halls of Congress and state capitol. As minimum wage workers march for better pay and working conditions so they can actually provide for their families, we are witnessing countless attempts to eliminate the minimum wage as well as on-the-job health and safety laws in the interest of taking more dollars from the pockets of workers.

On a whole array of issues at the federal, state and local levels, special interest groups and individuals hostile to any kind of viable labor movement are waging an all-out war. Here are just three other examples.

COMP TIME LEGISLATION: Securing a 40-hour work week and gaining overtime for U.S. workers remain among the most important achievements of the American trade union movement. But this basic right has come under attack in the guise of legislation claiming to give workers more flexibility in scheduling their hours. If ever enacted, such a measure could mean a pay cut of up to 59 percent for U.S. hourly workers.

Rather than giving workers more flexibility, comp time would result in mandatory overtime with that overtime becoming less costly to employers. Under such legislation, the bosses would be able to keep workers on the job longer and impose unpredictable and lengthy overtime at no extra cost to them.
It is critically important that trade unionists get the word out that comp time is NOT voluntary. Workers could be coerced into accepting comp time; the employer would have the ultimate authority to determine when workers may utilize accrued comp time.

Needless to say, the comp time scheme undermines the entire concept of a 40-hour workweek.

PAYCHECK DECEPTION: Over the past two decades, business groups seeking to reverse important worker protections have sought to dilute the power of the trade union movement. Once again, they are doing it at both the federal and state levels and are using misleading euphemisms to hide their real goals.

Thanks to the ill-conceived Citizens United Supreme Court decision, business groups have been able to flood the political process with a seemingly endless supply of dollars in their attempt to chisel away at the rights of working people all across the nation.

Since the MTD last met in convention, anti-worker governors and legislators in the Midwest have attacked workers’ rights. These attacks have come in different forms, from stripping public employees of their collective bargaining rights (successfully in Wisconsin, unsuccessfully in Ohio) to enacting all-out bans on fair share contracts (in Michigan and Indiana).

Organized labor has won a few of these fights, lost a few. And the process continues. In Missouri and other states, corporations are funding efforts to enact paycheck deception, similar to the measure labor beat back in California.

The public needs to know the truth, that paycheck deception laws would create unfair regulations. Organized labor would have to go through burdensome annual bureaucratic hoops to deduct dues from members’ paychecks and to use that money to advance workers’ interests, such as preventing onerous cuts to Social Security and Medicare.

One of the ironies of all this is that paycheck deception laws would limit the free speech of workers. Meanwhile, the sole basis for overturning decades of campaign finance reforms under the Citizens United decision was to give corporations unfettered political speech.
Impartial experts have called these laws what they really are: an all-out attack against working people. As Joshua Rosencranz of the Brennan Center for Justice wrote, “Their transparent motive is not to protect workers, but to silence them by diminishing their collective voice.” Moreover, the so-called “protections” they are saying would ensue already exist under present law.

PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS: Project labor agreements (PLAs) have advanced the interests of working people by requiring that government-generated projects adhere to the average wage and benefit standards of a specific area or region.

The concept behind this is clear: Government-generated projects should not be used to debase existing wage standards in any region.

Unfortunately, in Congress and a number of state legislatures, bills have been introduced that would disallow the federal or state governments from utilizing PLAs to protect prevailing wage standards. The train of thought is PLAs cost too much. Without them, governments would save money. Yet, case upon case presented by the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department shows the opposite is true – with PLAs in place, jobs cost less, finish on time or earlier and have less worker injuries.

Yet, earlier this year, North Carolina became the 17th state to enact an anti-PLA law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils continue their fight at all levels of government to oppose efforts to roll back important worker protections such as overtime, the 40-hour workweek, the right to belong to a union and project labor agreements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that understanding the severity of these attacks, the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils continue to do all we can to support grassroots and/or educational efforts put forward to strengthen America’s middle class and union members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils never tolerate efforts to dull the political power of the trade union movement. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure that American workers maintain the ability to join together to make their voices heard.
Thanks to the Defense Department’s Maritime Security Program (MSP), the United States military is able to have a sealift capability worth billions of dollars for a small fraction of the price. Enacted in 1996, the MSP provides an annual stipend to ensure 60 militarily useful U.S.-flag, U.S.-crewed ships are available to the military in times of war or national emergencies.

This agreement does much to improve the nation’s sealift capability while generating U.S. jobs and revenue. It is the definition of win-win.

Unfortunately, due to budget battles in Washington, funding for the MSP is threatened. The MSP currently is receiving only partial funding during fiscal year 2013 and could face further funding shortfalls in fiscal year 2014. This is because of a set of across-the-board spending cuts known as “sequestration” that went into effect earlier this year when Congress and the administration failed to reach a budget agreement.

The MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils call upon Congress and the administration to restore the MSP’s full financial support. The stakes are simply too high.

This isn’t just the opinion of the MTD. A bipartisan collection of members of Congress and top industry leaders also have come to the defense of the MSP, arguing that the country’s national and economic security would suffer without a fully funded MSP.

“Without fully funding the MSP, which ensures the continued operation of the nation’s commercial maritime security fleet, America would either have to place the safety of our troops and the security of our nation in the hands of foreign shipping interests or be forced to spend billions of taxpayer dollars to achieve the commercial sealift capability that the U.S.-flag commercial industry currently provides,” wrote the chairmen of House Subcommittees on Seapower and Projection Forces, Readiness, and Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.

Maersk CEO John Reinhart also stepped up to urge the administration to fully fund the MSP. If the reductions in MSP funding continue, he said, the program and the country’s security could be irrevocably damaged.
“MSP will not be able to maintain its 60-vessel U.S.-flag fleet unless the program is fully funded now and in the future,” Reinhart wrote in a letter to Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “U.S.-flag vessels lost now may not be available in the future. Such a deterioration of the U.S.-flag merchant fleet is not in the long-term best interest of the U.S. government.”

As the world continues to grapple with unrest and turmoil, the importance of the MSP could not be greater. American forces may be called into action at any moment. The U.S. military must know American merchant mariners aboard U.S.-flag vessels are ready to sail, wherever the mission takes them.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils continue to support the MSP and the good it does for the nation’s economy and national security and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils will continue to push Congress and the administration to provide full funding to the MSP to so it can continue to perform a much-needed service for the country.
PIRACY

A major issue confronting the maritime industry in recent years has been seaborne piracy and armed robbery against merchant ships off the coast of Somalia, in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean.

This dastardly scourge has cost the world’s economy billions of dollars, but of greater concern is the human cost. A staggering number of mariners traversing the Gulf of Aden, Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean and other high-traffic and economically significant waterways have suffered from attacks. Poorly protected commercial vessels traveling through this area since the mid-2000s have provided ideal targets for groups of armed men in small skiffs who were out to collect ransoms for successful hijackings.

But recently released statistics from international maritime bodies show that incidents of piracy have decreased dramatically since the heights of 2010-2011, when the highest ransom alleged to have been paid for the release of a vessel and its crew was $14 million.

According to a July 2013 global piracy report released by the International Chamber of Commerce and International Maritime Bureau (IMB), Somali piracy has fallen to its lowest levels since 2006. Worldwide, the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre recorded 138 piracy incidents in the first six months of 2013, compared with 177 incidents for the corresponding period in 2012. Seven hijackings have been recorded this year compared with 20 in the first half of 2012. The number of sailors taken hostage also fell dramatically; down to 127 this year from 334 in the first six months of 2012.

Despite this decrease in acts of piracy in Somalia, an alarming trend is manifesting itself in the Gulf of Guinea where kidnappings at sea are on the rise and a wider range of ship types are being targeted. This is a new cause for concern in a region already known for attacks against vessels in the oil industry and theft of gas and oil from tankers.

So far this year, 31 incidents, including four hijackings, have taken place. Armed pirates in the Gulf of Guinea took 56 sailors hostage and were responsible for all 30 crew kidnappings reported so far in 2013. One person was reported killed and at least five more were injured. Attacks off Nigeria
accounted for 22 of the region’s 31 incidents and 28 of the crew kidnappings.

Meanwhile, in East Africa’s Gulf of Aden and Somalia, eight piracy incidents including two hijackings were recorded in the first six months of 2013, with 34 seafarers taken hostage.

IMB attributes this significant drop in the frequency and range of attacks by Somali pirates to actions by international navies, as well as preventive measures by merchant vessels, including the deployment of privately contracted armed security personnel.

As of June 30, Somali pirates were holding 57 crewmembers for ransom on four vessels. They were also holding 11 kidnapped crewmembers on land in unknown conditions and locations. Four of these mariners have been held since April 2010 and seven since September 2010. Elsewhere in the world, low level thefts against vessels in ports and anchorages in Indonesia accounted for 48 attacks of which 43 vessels were boarded and some crew injured.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that despite the formerly noted progress, piracy remains a daily deadly threat for mariners and even recreational boaters. One incident is one too many; any loss of life among the world’s seafarers is unacceptable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils continue calling attention to an especially noteworthy and completely unacceptable aspect of piracy. Namely, most if not all of the so-called flags of-convenience or runaway-flags have either made woefully inadequate attempts to combat piracy, or they have made none at all. The burden of dealing with pirates is being borne by the seafarers themselves, ship operators and a few nations—including the United States—and the task of actually prosecuting pirates by even fewer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils reaffirm their commitment to spare no resource in winning the life-and-death struggle to stamp out piracy.
PORT MODERNIZATION

Billions of dollars in economic opportunities could simply drift away if a long-term, comprehensive plan is not put in place to modernize the nation’s aging and congested ports. With nearly 60 percent of American-made products being exported through those ports, the need could not be greater.

The MTD supports the work of organizations like Building America’s Future Education Fund, which is calling for federal action on port modernization. Made of up a bipartisan coalition of elected officials, this organization is focused on ensuring the nation’s ports remain reliable and able to handle expansion of the country’s import and export of goods. The MTD takes that position as well.

As Building America’s Future co-chair, former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, said in a recent speech, the cost of inaction on this issue would be enormous. Without upgrades to the nation’s ports, container traffic could be limited and potentially cost billions of dollars in economic activity.

“The bottom line is delays in freight movement impose real costs on business that reduce productivity, impede our competitiveness and increase prices for consumers,” Rendell said.

According to the Society of Civil Engineers, there is a $16 billion investment gap in meeting the needs of the nation’s ports and inland waterways. Without investment, the country could find itself falling further and further behind in the world.

The toll of inaction is already being felt. In 2005, the World Economic Forum ranked the United States number one in infrastructure. This year, the United States is ranked 25th.

Even President Obama called for port modernization in this year’s State of the Union address.

The problem facing inland waterways also was addressed in the most recent annual report by the Lake Carriers’ Association. More than 17 million cubic yards of sediment currently is clogging Great Lakes ports and
shipping channels, meaning vessels are unable to carry full loads into these ports. Known as “lightloading,” vessels can’t operate at their peak efficiency and customers are denied the price savings that come with larger bulk shipments.

The federal government even has a fund set aside to deal with such issues, but is not using that money. Established with cargo taxes to fund port modernization, the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund is sitting on a $7 billion surplus that continues to grow every year. That money could, and should, go toward dredging and other port modernization projects.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils will support all efforts to publicize the growing need for long-term port modernization and dredging project plans and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils will continue to call upon the federal government to fill the $16 billion investment gap in the nation’s ports and inland waterways and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils will continue working with our allies to call upon the federal government to use its $7 billion Harbor Maintenance Fund surplus for the purpose of port modernization and dredging projects.
One of the many downsides of the shrinking middle class is that fewer employers today offer defined-benefit pensions for their employees – and among those that do, many offer “defined-contribution” (like 401Ks) rather than traditional “defined-benefit” pension plans.

That’s why Social Security is essential for millions of retirees. Nearly two-thirds of retirees count on Social Security for at least half of their retirement income. For more than three in 10 retirees, Social Security is at least 90 percent of their income. It is a safety net that keeps retirees out of poverty.

Of course, it is every individual’s responsibility to determine what he or she will need to retire, and to plan accordingly. Figuring out how much Social Security will provide, knowing whether you have another form of income, and calculating expenses are all in the mix when it comes to pinpointing a retirement date.

For decades, workers achieved retirement security because their retirement income flowed from a combination of employer-provided pensions, Social Security and personal savings. But the recession has exposed the severe deficiencies in our retirement system.

For millions of Americans, retirement seems an unreachable goal. Rather than looking forward to well-deserved economic security in old age, many working people now fear retirement. Half of working Americans have no retirement plan at all at work. Most of those who have a retirement plan are in 401k savings accounts where the median balances are less than $30,000.

Taking into account all sources of income, it is estimated that the gap between what working Americans need to maintain their standard of living in retirement and what they actually have is $6.6 trillion. Most of the 76 million baby boomers will face retirement with fewer assets than previous generations had, and many will be forced to keep working in their retirement years to stay out of poverty.

If we were to start from scratch and build a new retirement security supplement, ideally we would want one that has shared responsibility of employers, employees and the government; portable lifetime benefits that are paid out only at retirement; pooled assets; professional management; efficient and transparent administration; and effective oversight. But we already have such a program. It is called Social Security.
While Social Security is an obvious solution to the crisis, its current benefit levels are too modest. Social Security’s income replacement rate is one of the lowest of all the industrialized countries. To compensate for the decline of traditional pensions and the loss of retirement savings, Social Security retirement benefits must be increased across the board, which would be especially meaningful for low-income seniors. In addition, Social Security COLAs need to take into account the higher health care costs faced by seniors. Finally, too many employers look for ways around making their contributions to Social Security through labeling their workers as independent contractors.

The MTD has repeatedly stated our opposition to any reduction of benefits, such as an increase in the retirement age or a decrease in cost-of-living adjustments, regardless of who proposes them. The reason why the debate in Washington, D.C., has gone so far in the wrong direction is that the enemies of Social Security have spent enormous amounts of money spreading misinformation about the program. The truth is that Social Security is not in crisis. It can pay all scheduled benefits through the year 2036 and three-quarters of all scheduled benefits thereafter. But there is one simple way of making sure Social Security remains viable and funded. As AFL-CIO constituency group Alliance for Retired Americans has proposed, Congress could pass legislation raising the cap on earnings subject to the Social Security tax.

If Social Security were a pension plan, it would be in the “green zone”—the healthy zone—under the Pension Protection Act. Social Security does not contribute one dime to the deficit, it is legally prohibited from borrowing or going into debt and it is not a significant driver of long-term fiscal imbalances.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils firmly believe we must change the terms of debate by focusing on the crisis of retirement security, because this is a debate in which benefit cuts have no place. The people who want to cut benefits should have to explain how they propose to solve this problem, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils stand with the vast majority of Americans, who believe Social Security is more important than ever and that its benefits should be increased. Social Security is the solution, not the problem.
In many parts of the world, today’s civilian mariners are among the most exploited workers due in large part because many of them work aboard vessels that fly the flag of a country other than the nation of ownership.

These floating sweatshops are the building blocks of the notorious “flag-of-convenience” (FOC) or runaway-flag system. It exists for one reason and one reason only: to allow companies to avoid responsibilities, whether that means paying taxes or adhering to minimum health, safety and environmental standards.

The FOC system became embedded in the international community after World War II, when Congress enacted the Ship Sales Act of 1946, which authorized the sale of American vessels overseas at cut-rate prices. The situation was exacerbated a year later when the government offered War Risk Insurance to American companies that had reflagged their vessels under registries deemed to be under “the Effective Control of the U.S.”

The rise of the FOC system has threatened traditional maritime registries. As a result, conditions in the international community have worsened. In response, the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and its maritime affiliates, a number of which are associated with the MTD, during the past 65 years have developed a set of policies which seek to establish minimum acceptable standards applicable to seafarers serving on FOC vessels.

These policies form the basis of an international standard collective agreement which sets the wages and working conditions for all crews aboard runaway-flag vessels regardless of nationality. All FOC ships covered by an ITF agreement are issued an ITF Blue Certificate by the confederation, which signifies its acceptance of the wages and working conditions on board. About a quarter of all FOC vessels currently are covered by ITF agreements, thus giving protection to more than 123,000 seafarers.

While the ITF’s policies have been extremely successful, they still fall short of the body’s ultimate goal: the total eradication of the scandal of runaway-flag shipping. Restoring integrity to the world’s maritime industry has never
been more important. Transparency and accountability are essential; their absence puts international safety at risk.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils remain steadfast in the ongoing fight for fair labor standards and safe working conditions for all mariners, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils will continue to provide strong support to the ITF’s FOC campaign.
SUPPORT FOR TITLE XI

While the U.S. shipbuilding industry provides an essential service to the nation, it currently is being underutilized. American-flag containerships are nearing the end of their life expectancy, but not enough is being done to ensure new bottoms are being built.

The fleet needs to be rebuilt and revitalized. The nation needs to maintain its defense shipbuilding base and an active U.S.-flag merchant marine.

That’s where the Title XI Shipbuilding Loan Guarantee Program comes in. Under Title XI, companies who build in U.S. shipyards have access to low-cost capital. Studies have shown that for every dollar invested in Title XI, $20 worth of economic activity is generated.

While this program is vitally important, Congress and the administration only have allocated enough funding to cover its administrative costs. For most of this century, the MTD has urged Congress and the White House to revive Title XI with the funding needed to help spur a new era in American shipbuilding.

Funding Title XI would do much more than just reinvigorate the country’s aging fleet. Economic benefits also would follow, as many jobs would be created and maintained in the domestic shipbuilding and related service and supply industries. That’s in addition to the jobs aboard U.S.-flag commercial vessels.

Having an adequate pool of skilled mariners is important to the nation, as they can be called upon to meet U.S. sealift needs in any circumstance, not to mention helping boost national economic security.

When funding for Title XI was revived by the Defense Reconversion Act of 1993, thousands of jobs were created or saved while America’s shipbuilding industry was stabilized. Millions of dollars also were generated on the state, local and federal levels. With that kind of record, there could be even more opportunities for jobs and economic benefits by reviving the Title XI program.
And, as we heard from a guest speaker from NASSCO during the February Executive Board meeting, there is also the very real probability that without proper investment in this vital industry, America will suffer the same fate as the United Kingdom, which has been reduced to five shipyards. Since 1953, the U.S. has lost more than 300 yards, both commercial and naval, but the nation still has around 100. It’s not too late.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils recognize the importance of the nation’s shipbuilding industry and the need to revitalize the U.S.-flag fleet and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils call upon Congress and the administration to increase funding to the Title XI Shipbuilding Loan Guarantee Program to proper and needed levels.
While many Americans have lost faith in many of the nation's institutions, confidence in and support for the men and women who serve in the U.S. military continues to remain sky high. And for good reason. Day after day, Soldiers, Sailors, Aviators, Marines and Guardsmen put their lives on the line to protect the country's safety, freedom and national interests. Where would America be without the professionalism and courage of those who serve in the military?

The MTD is proud of these brave men and women, many of whom are our own Union Brothers and Sisters. A number of MTD affiliates actively support the nation's troops every day on the homefront, both at home and around the globe. We also salute those who have served and earned the title of Veteran. The MTD is a proud member of the AFL-CIO Union Veterans Council.

However, those who are serving or have served on the front lines face a different battle finding a job. America must not and cannot turn its back on those who answered the call to duty. Never in the history of this nation have so many owed so much to so few. These people deserve more than mere lip service. They need concrete actions. These men and women, both retired and active, deserve the best. That has been the MTD’s belief since our inception in 1946.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils salute and thank the members of the United States Armed Forces past and present for their dedication to country and devotion to duty;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils continue to work to ensure those who served have decent, good-paying jobs and proper benefits when they are home; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils pray for the safe return of those in uniform stationed around the world.
TTIP TRADE TALKS

Negotiators with the United States and European Union will touch on a variety of topics during the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) talks that are scheduled to resume next month in Brussels. There is one issue, however, that should remain off the table. That issue is maritime.

While certain approaches to global trade have been effective in boosting economies and creating jobs, other approaches have had the opposite effect. Global trade gone wrong can decimate industries, destroy jobs and threaten national security.

Unfortunately, European interests are attempting to take the wrong approach on U.S. maritime issues during the TTIP talks. They are hoping to have U.S. maritime law on the table during negotiations as part of an attempt to open America’s maritime market to foreign interests. This would be a mistake. Putting U.S. maritime issues in play would put the country’s economic and national security at risk.

Current U.S. maritime laws are in place for a reason. Laws like the Jones Act were enacted to protect the country and ensure it has a proper fleet and a pool of skilled merchant mariners. It also results in more than 500,000 jobs and more than $100 billion in annual economic benefits. If U.S. maritime laws were negotiable, then the jobs of hardworking American mariners and the billions of dollars in economic output from our industry would be negotiable as well.

The same could be said of the nation’s national security. Allowing the possibility of negotiation on U.S. maritime policy is allowing the possibility of unsafely opening the country’s ports to foreign interests. It’s fair to say that vessels flying under another flag and their foreign crews have no loyalty to America. In this age of global terrorism, opening America’s domestic commerce and inland waterways to foreign interests is simply not an option.

Again, if U.S. maritime laws were negotiable, then the entire U.S. Merchant Marine would be put at risk. The fact remains that every one of our military and humanitarian missions undertaken around the world has relied on the
work of U.S. Merchant Mariners. Opening the U.S. maritime market to unfair and possibly dangerous foreign interests would cripple the domestic industry and severely reduce the good the U.S. can do around the world.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils continue to support U.S. maritime laws and publicize their effectiveness in protecting the nation’s economic and national security and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and Port Maritime Councils urge United States negotiators participating in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Talks with the European Union – as well as those U.S. negotiators participating in other trade talks – to keep maritime issues off the bargaining table.