

AUSTRALIA'S CABOTAGE BATTLE

For all of the genuine solidarity the MTD enjoys with our union brothers and sisters “down under,” this is one of those times when we wish we didn’t have quite so much in common.

Like the Jones Act here in the U.S., especially since Hurricane Maria, Australia’s cabotage laws remain under attack. In fact, Australian cabotage has eroded under the current conservative government, which seems intent on wiping out what’s left of that nation’s domestic fleet and its vital manpower pool.

Even when the words emanate from below the Equator, we recognize the ruse. The Turnbull Government pushes for “deregulation” and “competition” in the domestic maritime trade. Rather than an outright repeal of cabotage, they try to water down the rules surrounding foreign ships gaining temporary blessings to operate between Australian ports.

Fortunately, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) continues leading the charge to protect the industry, with strong backing from the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF). Paddy Crumlin, who serves as both the president of the ITF and the top official of the MUA, has been tireless in this battle, and deserves a tip of the cap.

We in the MTD count ourselves among the MUA’s strongest allies, and we are not alone. Check out these quotes from a recent op-ed by Josh Wilson, a member of Australia’s House of Representatives from Fremantle. Wilson wrote in part:

“Without a sovereign shipping capacity, our economy and security is at risk.... Maintaining an effective maritime capability requires naval capacity, an Australian merchant marine, a shipbuilding and sustainment industry and, of course, a skilled workforce and training framework.”

Wilson went on to point out that there is no Australian-flagged ship capable of transporting petroleum. Let that sink in for a moment, as a reflection of what can happen when domestic industries are allowed to wither.

Brothers and sisters, we may use different terminology and have different accents, but we do speak the same language regarding the nearly identical cabotage fight being waged on our counterparts from the land down under. We know they’ve got our backs, and we’ve got theirs.

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To our comrades from Australia, the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils pledge our full and ongoing support to promote, strengthen and rebuild that nation's maritime cabotage laws.

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PROTECTING MIDDLE CLASS JOBS

(Submitted by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union)

Despite a surging stock market, working families continue to bear the brunt of misguided corporate policies that place the needs of wealthy investors over those of workers and the communities in which they reside.

Jobs that supported generations of families and allowed American communities to thrive have been shipped to low-wage nations that allow multinational companies to exploit cheap labor and weak regulatory regimes.

For more than two years, the MTD-affiliated Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) has been challenging this corporate model in its campaign with one of the largest snack food companies in the world: Nabisco, a division of Mondelez International.

Through decades of changing corporate ownership, the company's executive leadership began a corporate strategy of closing and drastically downsizing unionized plants and moving that production to Mexico or to non-union co-manufacturers. Over the past five years, Mondelez has closed bakeries in Philadelphia, Toronto and Montreal, costing more than a thousand BCTGM members their livelihoods.

When the \$30 billion company announced in July 2015 that it would be laying off 600 workers at the iconic Chicago bakery and sending that production to a new \$400 million state-of-the-art bakery in Mexico, the BCTGM chose to launch a far-reaching campaign to fight this company and its anti-worker policies.

With the active support of the labor movement, including the MTD, and progressive organizations throughout the United States, the BCTGM launched a *Check the Label* campaign to educate consumers about the importance of not purchasing Made in Mexico Nabisco products and supporting American-made Nabisco brands.

The BCTGM then launched the *Nabisco 600* speaking tour, featuring laid off workers from the Chicago bakery telling their personal stories about losing their good, middle-class jobs. These workers have spoken in front of union conventions, meetings, and conferences. In the fall of 2016, the *Nabisco 600* speakers began a Campus Tour educating students and faculty at colleges and universities across the country about the impact of outsourcing, trade deals gone

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bad, corporate greed and worker exploitation. The campaign then teamed with Interfaith Worker Justice to produce a damning report: “Breaking faith: Outsourcing and the Damage Done to Our Communities”.

On March 14, 2017, the AFL-CIO Executive Council – citing the high-profile brands of the company, the current political environment that has shed light on the inequities of unfair trade deals, including NAFTA, and the company’s blatant attack on unionized workers – voted unanimously to designate the BCTGM’s Nabisco campaign as its first Solidarity campaign.

The BCTGM’s campaign has achieved extraordinary success to date, hitting the company hard at the cash register. The foundation of this success is labor solidarity. Ultimate victory for the BCTGM in this campaign will be a victory for the entire labor movement, and workers at all multi-national corporations that seek to outsource good, middle-class union jobs.

The MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils, reaffirm our unwavering support for our Sisters and Brothers of the BCTGM in its campaign against Nabisco-Mondelez.

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CANADA'S COASTING TRADE ACT

(Submitted by the Seafarers International Union of Canada)

“Canadian seafarers and Canadian vessel operators reserve the right to retain the first opportunity to engage in any domestic maritime operations prior to permitting access to a foreign vessel operator.” This was the message delivered to Canada’s Parliament by SIU Canada President and MTD Eastern Area Executive Board Member James Given during testimony before the House Transportation Committee in September on yet another piece of proposed legislation to attempt to further deregulate Canada’s maritime cabotage laws.

Similar to the Jones Act in the United States, in Canada any domestic maritime operations involving the movement of cargo or passengers between two points in Canada is reserved for Canadian-flagged and Canadian-crewed vessels. These regulations are enshrined in a long-standing piece of legislation known as the Coasting Trade Act.

The year 2017 was a difficult and long year of defending cabotage legislation in Canada. While not all battles were won outright, there were some great victories for the Canadian marine industry and Canadian mariners.

While the Jones Act has received long-standing bipartisan support in the U.S., which has resulted in a strong commitment from the U.S. Trade Representative to protect maritime cabotage in trade negotiations, the Canadian government used concessions in maritime cabotage to entice the European Union (EU) into signing the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement.

For the first time in history, vessel operators from EU countries now will be permitted to perform very limited operations previously reserved for Canadian vessels without having first to obtain a Coasting Trade Waiver from the government. While disheartening, the SIU Canada is content that we were able to influence this policy enough to contain the amendments to the cabotage regulations to only certain, very specific activities in which there was little Canadian content to begin with.

While the Parliament of Canada currently is considering other potential changes to the Coasting Trade legislation and actively is pursuing free trade agreements with nations in the Asia-Pacific and South America, the SIU Canada has become the primary voice defending Canadian seafarers and the Canadian maritime industry. Our voices are being heard in our work by all levels of government. We are proud to say that with our intervention no maritime

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cabotage has been traded away during the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade talks – a huge victory for Canadian shipping.

Canadian Parliamentarians from all political parties know the importance of maritime cabotage and the good-paying middle-class jobs that the SIU Canada fights to protect. While disagreements over policy do occur, there is no denying the important role that strong domestic shipping policy has in supporting the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Canadians in an industry that has a national economic impact of more than \$30 billion dollars, contributes \$3 billion into Canada's GDP and is a substantial source of benefits for both regional and local economies in indirect spinoffs.

The SIU Canada is also proud of our work over the last year alongside our partners in the government to develop a new maritime policy for the use of temporary foreign workers aboard foreign vessels operating in Canada. Under the new guidelines, foreign seafarers will not be granted work authorization in Canada without the prior approval of the SIU Canada. If allowed to work in domestic trade, they will receive all rights extended to them under Canadian labor law including wages, hours of work, overtime and other benefits.

This new policy will greatly deter the ability of any foreign shipowners to undercut Canadian shipowners and Canadian seafarers. This policy ensures that Canadians are given priority consideration for jobs on ANY vessel trading in Canada as foreign companies will be required to employ Canadian seafarers in any cabotage operations. This is a monumental victory for our industry and our mariners.

We know that we are not alone in our fight to protect cabotage laws. The SIU Canada is both proud of, and thankful for, the work done by our Brothers and Sisters in the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO and its affiliates. The Jones Act and the protections it affords domestic mariners in the United States remains the shining example by which all other maritime nations are able to leverage their own domestic maritime policies. There is no stronger piece of maritime legislation than the Jones Act.

Without the Jones Act and the MTD to help guide us forward, the seafaring industry and, most importantly, the men and women who defend Canada and move our goods to and from market would be stuck in a race to the bottom.

As always, we are stronger together.

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CARGO PREFERENCE/FOOD FOR PEACE

America's cargo preference laws and related food aid programs have come under unusually intense fire in the nation's capital. Some of these attacks stem from a Senate hearing late last year during which the typical half-truths and outright falsehoods were trotted out yet again – and without inviting anyone to be on the panel who could have set the record straight.

However, the one-sidedness of the hearing couldn't stop the USA Maritime coalition – whose member organizations include MTD affiliates as well as American-flag ship operators – from posting these illuminating numbers in response.

In its detailed rejoinder to testimony given to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, USA Maritime addressed several assertions by a representative of the Office of Food for Peace. One such declaration claimed the program's budget is hurt by the cost of shipping food aid cargoes on U.S.-flag vessels.

The coalition pointed out, "The requirement to ship U.S.-flag only applies when such vessels are 'offered at fair and reasonable rates.' Therefore, if the rates are not fair and reasonable, a resort may be to use foreign-flag carriers, which USAID [the United States Agency for International Development] does often. Shipping on U.S.-flag vessels instead of foreign competitors costs Food for Peace less than one percent of the program budget. In fact, all of Food for Peace's expenditures on ocean freight – foreign and U.S.-flag shipping combined – consume only 8.2 percent of the Food for Peace program budget, compared with the 60.2 percent of the program that USAID spends on overhead items other than commodities, ocean freight, and inland transportation."

USA Maritime continued, "The statement completely ignores the much larger savings to the U.S. taxpayer because the Department of Defense can rely upon the commercial fleet supported by cargo preference requirements. The cost to replicate this capacity is approximately \$13 billion in vessel capital costs and over \$1 billion annually in operating costs. The statement also ignores the leadership role that the U.S.-flag community takes in advocating for and supporting the Food for Peace budget before Congress and the additional funds available to USAID, a result which more than compensates for any cargo preference premium needed to support our national defense sealift fleet."

If any of that sounds familiar, it may be because we heard from Anthony Fisher of the U.S. Maritime Administration when we met in San Antonio last year, and he drove home similar

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points. He also memorably used the term “budget dust” when describing the nominal cost of ocean transportation in the supply chain.

Cargo preference laws require that all government-impelled military cargoes and half of government-impelled civilian cargoes move on American-flag, U.S.-crewed ships. However, the latter percentage had been 75 before it was reduced in 2012, and that cut has taken a severe toll on the U.S.-flag fleet and the Americans who sail for a living.

Our bottom line is that cargo preference and all of its components, including Food for Peace, is a very effective policy that helps keep good jobs at home while spreading humanitarian aid around the world.

The MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils emphatically call for the United States to maintain all of its cargo preference programs at fully funded levels. In addition, the MTD backs a return to the 75-percent threshold that served America so well before 2012. Such a move will result in ships returning to the American-flag fleet, which in turn will boost our shipboard manpower pool and thereby boost U.S. national, economic and homeland security.

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SUPPORT THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

In this global economy, the United States needs to utilize every possible advantage in order to remain competitive among the rest of the global market, without sacrificing the rights of the American worker. One such tool is the Export-Import Bank

Similar structures in other nations have different names but are used by those governments to compete for projects and financing opportunities. And it is one that U.S. companies and workers have been deprived of for nearly three years.

Due to congressional inaction, the Ex-Im Bank's charter expired in June 2015, after 81 years of continual service. Since then, the loan services offered by the bank to U.S. exporters and other business customers looking to build and buy American have been drastically limited. Even though the charter was reauthorized in December 2015, it remains largely closed for business as there has not been the required number of executive board members at the bank to allow the financing of projects larger than \$10 million.

Despite the fact that the Ex-Im Bank doesn't cost American taxpayers a single cent, and actually helps reduce the national debt by transferring millions of dollars in receipts to the U.S. Treasury, opponents claim the bank amounts to little more than "corporate welfare." Those opponents to the Ex-Im Bank continue to block every attempt to hold a confirmation vote on the Senate floor, which – if reports are accurate – would pass, thus allowing the bank's new executive board members to get to work.

Since the bank was first allowed to become unfunded, more than \$10 billion dollars in new loans have been lost to competing foreign markets, according to Acting First Vice President of the Ex-Im Bank Scott Schloegel. That's \$10 billion worth of exportable goods, American jobs and economic leverage that have gotten tired of waiting and taken their business to other countries. Despite those lost contracts, the line is long, according to Schloegel, who said, "We have roughly \$35 billion in transactions in the pipeline right now, and that represents roughly a quarter of a million jobs."

Even without mentioning that one industry served by Ex-Im Bank loans is the U.S.-flag fleet, Schloegel's statement raises warning signals for the MTD and its affiliates. By law, cargo generated by the bank must be transported aboard U.S.-flag vessels. As MTD President Michael Sacco often has said, it is all about jobs, jobs, jobs. From our point of view, that's the bottom line with the Ex-Im Bank, and it is high time the bank is able to get back to work.

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So, yet again, the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils call for the Senate to vote to fill the necessary seats for the Ex-Im Bank's Executive Board. We urge those blocking a vote to reconsider the importance of such a globally competitive, free market tool, and to stop holding hundreds of thousands of American jobs hostage.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

You don't have to look far to see signs of America's failing infrastructure: pothole-filled roads, long lines of traffic on clogged highways, ports that need dredging, and power failures from outdated electrical grids. It's clear that something must be done to fix these problems, and those solutions can only be put in motion by those at the top.

One of the most prominent issues that the Labor Movement, the current administration and both major political parties found common ground on during the last election was the need to improve our nation's infrastructure. That was almost 18 months ago, but little has been done to help alleviate the ever-mounting problems within America's roads, grids, ports and other systems.

As AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka stated, "President Trump has rightly noted the urgency and scale of America's infrastructure crisis, and he has an opportunity to fix it. Unfortunately, [the most recent] proposal relies more on accounting gimmicks and Wall Street investors than on a new federal commitment, which leaves states and municipalities to pick up the tab."

It's critically important for every American that a solid plan be developed to repair and rebuild the infrastructure we use every day. "The right infrastructure plan will lift our communities and drive our economy forward for generations to come," Trumka added. "That's why this issue is so important and why the AFL-CIO and our affiliates are working actively with Congress to craft legislation that achieves these goals in a bipartisan way."

Among facilities badly in need of upgrading is the nation's navigable waterway system. From harbors and ports to rivers and canals, many are using – or should we say, limping along with – technology and equipment that can be up to 100 years old. America's inland locks and dams are in dire need of modernization. The Great Lakes face a potential disaster utilizing a single lock capable of handling the thousand-footers within the Soo Locks. From the Pacific, to the Gulf of Mexico, to the Atlantic and even the Lakes, harbors and ports are filling with silt as more dredging is needed. Should any one of these break down, America's economy would be severely harmed.

Trumka laid it out plain and simple: "If our nation's leaders are serious about building America, they need to step up with trillions of dollars in new federal funding that supports America's jobs, America's resources and America's products. And they need to uphold high labor standards and good wages and protect working people on the job. If they do, we have the most highly skilled and well-trained workforce ready to get the job done."

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The MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils couldn't agree more. Let's get Americans back to work, by rebuilding an America that works efficiently, safely and reliably. And let us do it with the best-trained, safest and most experienced workers available – union brothers and sisters.

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SUPPORT THE JONES ACT

Despite its nearly century-long record of success, the Jones Act – America’s freight cabotage law – continues to be targeted by detractors as a measure that needs either to be weakened or altogether eliminated.

Cabotage laws have been the norm since the early days of our nation. The first Congress of the United States in 1789 restricted registration for coastal trades and fisheries to U.S.-built and U.S.-owned vessels and gave these vessels preferential treatment with respect to tonnage taxes and cargo import duties. Additional cabotage laws designed to fend off foreign operators were legislated during the years between that first cabotage law and the passage of the Jones Act over a century later.

Enacted in 1920 in response to America’s lack of preparedness for World War I, the Jones Act requires that cargo moving between U.S. domestic ports be carried on vessels that are crewed, built, owned and flagged American. It calls for providing the nation with a merchant marine that can transport goods between U.S. ports, increase national security during war times, and support a U.S. maritime industry. The measure’s sponsor, Senator Wesley Jones of Washington, declared, “Nations are not free that depend on foreign fleets to carry their products and bring them their supplies.”

Since its inception, the Jones Act has always enjoyed widespread support. Among its backers are legislators from both sides of the aisle; U.S. military leaders; non-partisan, non-profit think tanks; a number of well-respected journalists; published researchers; and every White House no matter the party. Without exception, Jones Act supporters concur that the law is critical to the national, economic and homeland security needs of the United States; its value has been proven time and again.

According to the American Maritime Partnership coalition, whose member organizations include MTD affiliates, the measure since its origin has:

- Made sure that 70 percent of the oceangoing self-propelled vessels in the Jones Act fleet are militarily useful, which is of vital importance as 95 percent of materiel used by forces overseas moves by water;
- Moved an average of 1 billion tons worth of cargo every year with a market value of \$400 billion;
- Pumped \$29 billion in annual wages into the American economy;
- Sustained nearly 500,000 jobs directly and indirectly;

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- Added \$46 billion to the value of U.S. economic output each year;
- Produced \$11 billion in taxes annually; and
- Maintained a pool of skilled civilian mariners capable of meeting the nation's strategic sealift needs.

Regardless of its merit, the Jones Act regularly comes under fire from those who either truly don't understand it or whose agendas don't include preserving the U.S. Merchant Marine.

A notable example occurred in 2010 during the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon disaster. On that occasion, the Jones Act and the Obama Administration were targets of drastically inaccurate criticism by some media outlets and elected representatives who falsely claimed that the Jones Act was impeding cleanup operations following the fatal explosion, which also resulted in a cataclysmic oil spill.

The administration and then-national incident response commander, U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen, refuted those false claims, and the official government report on the spill response later confirmed that the Jones Act in no way slowed the cleanup. The facts are that the Jones Act did not apply where the spill occurred (50 miles from the U.S.), and foreign-flag assistance was utilized (along with U.S.-flag tonnage) essentially from the start. Further, the administration quickly set up an expedited Jones Act-waiver process in case any were needed for related operations closer to shore.

More recently, critics wrongly claimed the Jones Act hampered relief efforts in Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria. Even though nothing could have been further from the truth, Jones Act opponents used their flawed accusations as a foundation to call for weakening or eliminating the law. It was of little consequence to them that the backdrop for their claims showed stacks and stacks of containers delivered to the Port of San Juan by U.S.-flag vessels. They willingly neglected the fact that Jones Act ships were offloading in Puerto Rico within hours after the first port reopened and that these vessels continue to deliver vital cargoes even today. They completely overlooked the fact that because of damaged roads and numerous other infrastructure problems, significant portions of the waterborne cargo initially stayed in the ports. They coasted right past the fact that none of these circumstances had anything to do with any maritime law.

Succinctly put, virtually every statement put forth in each of the former situations as justification to weaken or kill the Jones Act was a lie; once again, the Jones Act was falsely accused.

For these and other reasons, the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils must remain resolutely committed to doing everything in our power to ensure that the integrity of the Jones Act remains firmly intact.

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The MTD once again vows to continue its work with its affiliates, its Port Maritime Councils and grassroots organizations like the American Maritime Partnership to promote and protect the Jones Act in every possible way, including by educating elected officials and the American public about the critical magnitude and irreplaceable value of the Jones Act.

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SOLIDARITY WITH PUERTO RICO

So much has been written and said about hurricane recovery operations in Puerto Rico, it might take a lifetime to review it all.

Understandably, given the loss of life and the staggering amount of property and infrastructure damage, a lot of the coverage and commentary has ranged from critical to contentious to accusatory to, in the case of the Jones Act opponents, somewhere between fictional and delusional.

Even the most tragic data related to the storm is still being debated. Late last month, the territory's governor announced the formation of a task force to review and investigate the number of deaths related to Maria. To date, the official number is somewhere below 100, but a *New York Times* report concluded that roughly 1,000 more people than usual died in the commonwealth within the first month and a half after the storm.

While the human toll is obviously most important, the financial damage is significant, too. Several published reports have estimated that it will cost upwards of \$95 billion to fully restore the island.

Notwithstanding all of that information, the MTD takes this opportunity to convey a very important message to our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico. Namely, we are with you. We were there from the start of the recovery, and we will be there right through to the end.

AFL-CIO unions – including MTD affiliates – represent 100,000 Puerto Rican residents. Union members have been involved in every phase of the recovery and rebuilding effort. We have contributed not only money, but also manpower. For instance, shortly after the hurricane, more than 300 skilled union volunteers – including doctors, nurses, electricians and heavy equipment operators – traveled from the mainland to Puerto Rico to provide assistance. And, as mentioned, Jones Act ships were at the piers as soon as they reopened, bringing the first wave of relief cargoes.

Operation Agua is another example of unions and other organizations teaming up to help with recovery. This magnificent outreach, spearheaded by the American Federation of Teachers, has raised nearly \$2 million – which in turn has translated into the delivery of around 50,000 water purification systems across the island. Operation Agua is still going strong.

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Let no one doubt that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils stand in 100 percent solidarity with the citizens of Puerto Rico. We respect the magnitude of the tragedy inflicted by Hurricane Maria. We will continue rising to the occasion to restore normalcy and help rebuild lives across the island.

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SUPPORT AMERICA'S SHIPYARDS

We know all too well the seemingly endless assaults under which the Jones Act finds itself. When these attacks happen, one of the most common targets is the U.S.-build requirement, the section of the cabotage law that requires vessels operating within the Jones Act trade be built at an American shipyard.

The build requirement is a critical part of keeping the U.S.-flag fleet sailing, while also creating thousands of jobs for American workers in shipyards across the country. According to the Maritime Administration, there are 124 active shipyards in the United States – located in 27 states - and more than 110,000 shipyard-related jobs, in all 50 states. Together, the individuals at those facilities work tirelessly to build, repair or refit vessels to keep the Jones Act fleet strong and growing. Any attack on the Jones Act - especially on the U.S.-build requirement - is an attack on American workers, plain and simple.

Significantly, the American-built fleet contains some of the most efficient, modern vessels across the globe. Matthew Paxton, president of the Shipbuilders Council of America, stated during a recent U.S. House of Representatives hearing, “U.S. shipyards build some of the most technologically advanced vessels in the world. For example, the world’s first LNG-powered containership was built in the U.S. and is now serving the Puerto Rican trade. [*May we add by union workers!*] Our shipyards also build world-class offshore service vessels for oil and gas exploration, vessels of all types for the Coast Guard, and state-of-the-art vessels for the Navy.”

Paxton also said, “The Jones Act ensures a commercial shipbuilding industry, supplier chain, and workforce that can support building and maintaining these Navy assets, making it a major national security benefit. It is for that reason that the U.S. Navy has always, and continues, to support the Jones Act.”

These American-built ships create good-paying jobs, protect the nation and contribute \$37.3 billion dollars to the national GDP. The MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils proudly stand with and support our brothers and sisters in the shipbuilding trade and will continue to defend the U.S.-build requirement of the Jones Act to ensure that America’s shipyards remain open for business and thriving.

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STANDING WITH PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS

(Submitted by the American Federation of Government Employees
and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees)

As we meet, our sisters and brothers within the public sector await the Supreme Court's decision in a case that could undermine labor's ability to organize these workers.

The Court heard *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31* last month. At stake is whether unions will be able to collect agency fees to cover administrative and legal costs incurred by a local or district from those covered by a collective bargaining but choosing not to join.

Ever since passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935 (as well as President Kennedy's signing of Executive Order 10988 for federal workers in 1962), anti-union forces have attempted to cripple workers coming together to seek better pay and decent benefits from their employers. Right-to-Work (for Less) laws now in place in 27 states allow freeloaders to obtain union-negotiated wages, union-negotiated benefits and union-negotiated on-the-job protections without paying a cent toward these costs.

As we know in the Labor Movement, agency fees are designed to cover the cost of such necessary work, but do not include money used for political action. The *Janus* instigators are trying to claim any and all negotiations that benefits public sector employees by nature is political.

Public sector employees are our family, friends and neighbors. From the municipal and county, to the state and federal levels, these are the men and women who make government work. They are the courthouse clerks, the voting registrars, the classroom teachers, the game wardens, the prison guards, the Social Security processors, the park rangers... the list goes on-and-on. Whether we realize it or not, they affect our lives each-and-every day.

This battle for public sector workers is nothing new. Fifty years ago, brave men who had had enough left their garbage trucks in Memphis to declare "I AM A Man" and fight to have union representation. Such efforts continue today.

The MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils stand with our fellow public sector brothers and sisters in their fight to have union representation, to have decent wages, to have proper benefits and to have a safe workplace. As the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. declared during that Memphis strike a half-century ago, "All work has dignity."

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SUPPORT FOR TACOMA LNG TERMINAL

(Submitted by the Puget Sound Ports Council)

The Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO has long supported efforts to reduce environmental impacts from shipping and minimize environmental hazards for those who earn their living on the vessels, in the ports and along the waterways facilitating the trade and commerce sustaining the nation's economy. For this reason, we were very pleased to see U.S.-flag companies TOTE, Crowley Maritime and Matson Navigation (whose union crews are affiliated with the MTD) take the bold initiative to be among the first cargo vessel operators in the world to seek the conversion of existing vessels and/or construction of new vessels to use liquefied natural gas (LNG) as their main propulsion source.

During the last 18 months, the Puget Sound Ports Council has been fighting back against opposition to building an LNG facility in Tacoma and the use of LNG as an alternative fuel in the Puget Sound. While vessels using LNG reduce greenhouse gasses from 15 to 25 percent, the real gain is that LNG reduces the release of stack fuel particulates by 96 percent. Yet, recent attacks by some in the environmental community are making false claims, and distorting facts and science.

LNG has much better emissions performance than conventional fuels and solutions. LNG emits zero sulphur oxide and virtually zero particulate matter. Compared to existing heavy marine fuel oils, LNG can emit – depending on the technology used – 90 percent fewer nitrogen oxide emissions. Furthermore, LNG's greenhouse gas performance represents a major step forward when compared with traditional maritime fuels. Ongoing efforts to reduce methane leak will further drive down greenhouse gas impacts.

For these reasons, policy leaders recognize natural gas as the bridge fuel for the 21st century as the world grapples with innovating other alternative energy sources. Particularly under the emissions control requirements found in North America and relative to rail or trucks, moving cargo via marine transportation – from coastal containerships and tankers to tugs and barges – reduces greenhouse emissions while conserving energy.

In the ocean-going maritime world, there remain few alternatives for marine propulsion systems. LNG is clearly the most environmentally sound choice. Consequently, an ever-increasing number of vessels are being built to accommodate LNG. Ports seeking to remain competitive must be able to offer shore side LNG bunkering facilities and accommodation.

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Despite all that LNG offers, the bold commercial risks taken and the tens of millions of dollars U.S.-flag companies have spent, there are some Pacific Northwest organizations and politicians who are twisting the truth to create havoc on what is the clearest, safest and cleanest path for our membership and industry along with our regional communities.

The MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils join with the Puget Sound Ports Council to call on the state of Washington's municipal and county councils, the Washington State Legislature and Governor Jay Inslee to support the health and well-being of our communities through the reduction of harmful pollutants and stack fuel particulates. We further seek to quickly move this agenda to facilitate the use of LNG for marine propulsion in order to preserve maritime commerce in a state known to be one of the most trade dependent in the nation.

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KEEPING THE PROMISE TO MINERS & WIDOWS

(Submitted by the United Mine Workers of America)

President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9728 on May 21, 1946, which required the U.S. Interior Department to take possession of all bituminous coal mines in the U.S., and the government assumed the task of negotiating and ultimately commencing “appropriate changes in the terms and conditions of employment.”

Then-Interior Secretary Krug negotiated the National Bituminous Wage Agreement with UMWA President John L. Lewis, which was signed in the White House with President Truman looking on. The historic Krug-Lewis Agreement created a Welfare and Retirement Fund, which was intended to make *...payments to miners, and their dependents and survivors, with respect to wage loss not otherwise compensated at all or adequately under the provision of Federal or State law and resulting from sickness... permanent disability, death, or retirement....* The agreement also created a Medical and Hospital Fund which built hospitals throughout the coal fields.

The following year the government returned control of the mines to the mine operators. Every subsequent National Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement has required that signatory employers participate in and contribute to the Welfare and Retirement Fund, which ultimately became the 1974 Pension Fund. Mine operators also contractually agreed to provide lifetime health care and pensions for retired and disabled miners and their surviving spouses.

To achieve this end, miners for more than 70 years exchanged less in their wallets on payday to secure dignity in retirement for themselves and their surviving spouses. Over the decades as bankruptcies and other economic shocks hit the coal industry, the U.S. government has continued to recognize that it needed to keep the promise of the Krug-Lewis agreement, which continues to play a role in guaranteeing retiree health care for those retirees and widows whose companies went out of business.

The UMWA wants the record to reflect our recognition and appreciation for the Maritimes Trades Department, AFL-CIO and our affiliated brothers and sisters who have fought beside us to save the lives of our nations’ coal miners. We salute you as true patriots and stewards of all that is good for humankind and the Labor Movement.

The Krug-Lewis promise is, however, only half fulfilled, because bankruptcy restructuring and dissolution has allowed coal employers that participated in the UMWA 1974 Pension Fund to end their contributions without paying any withdrawal liabilities.

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The national recession of 2008-09 caused the 1974 Fund, which was funded properly, to lose a substantial portion of its value with no clear path for recovery. Since that recession, a depression in the coal fields has caused tens of thousands of jobs to be eliminated, diminishing contributions to the fund at the very time the amount of retirees receiving benefits is at its peak.

Coal miners have sacrificed much to energize and build America; more than 200,000 coal miners have been killed on the job or died as a result of black lung in the last century.

Congress has established a bipartisan, bicameral Joint Select Committee on Solvency of Multiemployer Pension Plans which has been given the task of drafting legislation that is to be reported out of the committee by the last week of November.

The Joint Select Committee could provide the necessary financial assistance to the UMWA 1974 Pension Fund and other union pension funds, thereby preventing their collapse.

The MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils recognize the needs of America's coal miners and pledge our support to our brothers and sisters in the United Mine Workers of America to obtain their well-deserved pensions.

The MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils further pledge to take all necessary steps to aid in the production of legislation from the Joint Select Committee on Solvency of Multiemployer Pension Plans so that the collapse of the UMWA 1974 Pension Fund is prevented.

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SUPPORT FOR TROOPS & VETERANS

The MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils feel a special bond with the brave men and women who serve in America's armed forces.

Our respect and appreciation for the hundreds of thousands of active-duty personnel as well as the millions who have retired is heartfelt and unflinching.

Those serving in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard represent the very best of American society. In many instances, they also are our own union sisters and brothers. They are maritime officers and crewmembers, Painters, Machinists, Plumbers, Bakers, Mine Workers and more. They are also our sons and daughters, our fathers and mothers.

Day after day for more than 17 years since America invaded Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11, each of them – soldiers, sailors, aviators, Marines and guardsmen – have put their lives on the line for us. They did so to protect the country's safety, freedom and national interests. Individually and collectively, they have sacrificed so much for us, helping preserve our dreams and our aspirations.

When they return home, however, many of those who are serving or have served on the front lines will find a country that is largely unprepared to meet their needs. They will now face a different kind of battle. Many will combat lifelong illnesses and disabilities; some will clash with government agencies in efforts to get the help they were promised in the form of disability payments, health care and treatment for such afflictions as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, physical disabilities and sexual trauma. By and large, however, most will be faced with the seemingly endless clash associated with finding a job.

The MTD calls upon the entire Labor Movement to come together to permanently alter this disgraceful landscape.

These military men and women are some of the best-trained and most dedicated leaders that our nation has to offer; they richly deserve better. They always have been there for us, and now it's time for us to be there for them. Providing for these veterans by ensuring that they have access to meaningful employment is not only good for business; it's good for the economic health of the country.

There is some very good, recent news in this vein. The American Maritime Partnership, the nation's largest coalition of U.S.-flag maritime business and unions, just unveiled the *Military*

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to *Maritime* Digital Career Platform (www.militarytomaritime.org). Launched in February, the program is dedicated to helping veterans find meaningful, family-wage jobs in the maritime industry while supporting America's national and economic security.

Building on the success of numerous *Military to Maritime* career fairs that were held across the country during the past several years, the enhanced digital platform connects veterans with career opportunities in the U.S. shipbuilding and maritime industry. It also provides training and credentialing information to help veterans in their transition from military service to the maritime sector. U.S. maritime industry employers can upload their job openings to this website. Veterans and active military can search the hundreds of maritime-related careers currently posted.

The opportunities afforded veterans in AMP's *Military to Maritime* Digital Career Platform represent a major step forward toward our ultimate goal of a fully employed veterans force. As a nation, however, we can and must do more to aid and assist those who put it all on the line for us.

The MTD has a rich tradition of supporting our men and women in uniform – both active duty and retired – and their families. Including the MTD's affiliation with the AFL-CIO Union Veterans Council, that tradition remains very much alive and applicable today. The MTD will continue to take every viable step to help ensure that every veteran in search of employment finds it in short order.

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