



RESOLUTIONS

2026 MTD QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION



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WE WILL NOT LET AI TAKE OUR JOBS

We've seen all kinds of attempts over the years from big corporations and immoral CEOs to save a buck. Time and time again, unions have sniffed it out and put a stop to it. We've always fought to protect workers' rights from all attacks, and this time, the attack is coming from inside your phone.

AI has been pitched to the world as a time-saving, fun distraction at your fingertips — but think about that for a second. How do the CEOs and the "one percent" get richer by giving the world AI assistants? Look to our brothers and sisters in SAG-AFTRA for a startling example. Media moguls were determined to use AI to replicate a performer's image, voice, mannerisms and even their clothes, and then use them over and over and over again without compensating the actual people.

The desired cost savings were revealed in a single negotiation: They'll try to hoard money by cutting jobs, replacing a hard-working union member with an AI that never needs to visit the doctor, go on vacation or draw a pension. The cost they want to cut is you.

In a survey of union members conducted by David Binder Research, 91% sided with SAG-AFTRA on ordering bosses to get permission from workers before such uses. And 78% said there must be curbs on all of bosses' harmful uses of AI against workers.

The voice of the people was heard loud and clear, and SAG-AFTRA won their fight and got the language they sought codified into their new contract. However, that fight was the first of many, many more to come, as every industry will look to utilize AI to cut costs — and we already know what cost they want to cut first.

To try and safeguard against these blatant anti-worker agendas, the AFL-CIO has set up an entire institute, whose job is to deal with the emergence of AI in the workplace, its impact and how to limit its use or turn it to the advantage of workers everywhere.

Unions have always been at the forefront of technological innovation that benefits workers, and we freely agree that AI could have some beneficial applications. But in the wrong hands, it's a dangerous weapon against workers trying to earn a fair paycheck. And without exception, workers and their unions must have a seat at the table and a voice in the discussions about the possible use of AI.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils will work with our members to help educate and advocate for the beneficial and ethical use of AI where it is applicable, and fight back against any attempts to use AI in ways that seek to cut jobs and replace workers.

ESSENTIAL NEED FOR CARGO

Depending on how long someone has worked in the maritime industry, they may have heard this expression once or a hundred times: Cargo is king.

Without cargo, we could gain a huge number of vessels, but it wouldn't matter. You can think of it like the maritime version of the movie "Field of Dreams," whose script famously included the line, "If you build it, they will come." The MTD collectively is very confident that if there's ample cargo for American-flag and Canadian-flag ships, our affiliates will capably meet any manpower challenge.

More than once during the past two years, MTD affiliates in the U.S. have testified before Congress that the most important aspect of any future maritime policy must be centered around cargo. Whatever problems the industry faces, whether they revolve around shipbuilding, ship operating, workforce development or national security, increasing the base of cargo available for U.S.-flag ships provides the headwinds that make solving those problems possible.

Commercial ships do not sail without cargo. In fact, without cargo, there is no need for a ship. With no need for a ship, there is no need for the mariners to crew her, and no shipyard is needed to build her. Companies make no money, workers aren't paid, and our trade gets moved by foreign-flag ships with foreign crews.

It is vital to note that the mariners and the vessels of our commercial fleet are critical to our national security. Mariners who crew commercial ships in peacetime are necessary to operate our government-owned surge and sustainment fleets. Without work for them in peacetime, they will find other jobs, lose their credentials and the sea-time required to sail under existing law, and we will be hard-pressed to replace them when — not if — they are needed in the future.

As noted earlier this year by U.S. Maritime Administrator Steve Carmel when testifying before Congress: "The foundation of any effort to rebuild our maritime power must rest on access to cargo. Every conversation, whether it is shipbuilding, ship repair, or fleet renewal must start and end with cargo.

During that same hearing, the commanding officer of the United States Transportation Command, General Randall Reed, stated, "The fundamental principle in maritime is: More cargo means more U.S.-flag ships, and more U.S.-flag ships means more U.S. mariners, a virtuous cycle that strengthens both our commercial industry and national defense posture."

The Maritime Trades Department wholeheartedly agrees with these sentiments, and we will continue our efforts supporting existing programs and creating new ones that generate cargo for our industry.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils wholeheartedly agree with these sentiments, and we will continue our efforts supporting existing programs and creating new ones that generate cargo for our industry.

SHARPENING OUR STRATEGIES FOR GRASSROOTS POLITICAL ACTION

The advent of the current administration began with several swiftly orchestrated attacks on the Labor Movement. Since then, the effects of these overreaching edicts have impacted working people and are en route to potentially undoing the decades of progress that grassroots organizers have been fighting and risking their lives and livelihoods for. The MTD will not sit idly by and let this happen, and remains resolute in its commitment to grassroots action, including getting boots on the ground to advocate for and protect the rights of workers.

Public Services have been historically underfunded, and collective bargaining rights and unionization efforts have always been points of contention. Income inequality and corporate influence in the political sphere both continue to rise, unabated by an administration deadset on enacting policies which continue to disempower the American worker.

To fight back, we must continue leading our grassroots efforts with a focus on organized, sustained actions like door-to-door canvassing, phone banking, town halls, rallies, and direct communication with our members and elected officials. We also must continue educating politicians about the needs of workers, spreading the word about our industry to gain support, and demanding accountability from those in power. Historically, union members and community allies lead the most effective forms of political action. That's why throughout the years we have made significant gains in advancing labor rights, securing workplace protections, and influencing policy decisions at the local, state, and federal levels.

But the threats are real, too. For example, this April, a directive was issued to immediately terminate collective bargaining agreements across the Department of Defense. This move, instituted under Executive Order 14251, strips union rights from more than 300,000 civilian employees, which includes mariners who work aboard government-owned vessels. Our maritime partners are collaborating with the AFL-CIO to form a strategic response to this development.

We have also joined forces with more than 20 labor organizations to advocate for legislative support for the No Tax on Overtime for All Workers Act (H.R. 5475/S. 4310), a bill aimed at providing tax relief for mariners and millions of other workers across the country. This bill would ensure that all similarly situated workers nationwide qualify for tax relief under the recently established tax deduction for overtime earnings and will provide immediate tax relief to millions of additional workers across the nation.

Grassroots political action is a continuous, year-round responsibility, rather than something reserved for presidential election years or high-profile midterms. Even so, we do also encourage everyone to vote in midterm elections. Make sure you show up at the polls and cast your ballots for the congressional, state, and local races, because the decisions made there have the power to impact working families. To learn more about the races in your midterm election and your local legislators' policies on labor, please utilize the AFL-CIO's "legislative scorecard," which is easy to find online.

Finally, we recognize that grassroots political action is crucial to the advancement of the goals of the Labor Movement and protecting the rights of all working people. We encourage every union member to participate in the democratic process through voter registration drives, education on Labor-endorsed candidates, and turnout efforts in every election, no matter how large or small.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils recommit to strengthening our efforts toward grassroots political action in the face of challenges to the maritime industry, and to Labor as a whole.

SUPPORT THE JONES ACT

While attacks on America’s freight cabotage law are nothing new, we admit surprise and disappointment with the recent Jones Act waiver and subsequent extension issued by the Trump administration. Because of the president’s stated intent to restore America’s maritime dominance, and in line with his “America First” agenda, the Jones Act could easily have been viewed as the most secure law on the books, not just within the maritime industry but across the board.

Oops.

The waiver and extension, both unprecedented in length, drew widespread rebuke from Labor, management and government. Candidly, while on some level we might have understood a very limited, very brief waiver strictly for optics, the one that was enacted is ineffective and dangerous. At a time when the United States should be reinforcing its maritime strength, this action moves us in the opposite direction. The Jones Act is not simply an economic policy; it is a cornerstone of our national security, ensuring that America maintains a fleet of U.S.-flagged vessels crewed by highly trained American mariners who are ready to serve in both peace and war.

Something the administration may not have considered is that waiving the Jones Act undermines our ability to recruit and retain the next generation of U.S. Merchant Mariners. Our workforce is already under pressure. Policies like this send the wrong signal to those considering a career at sea and to those currently serving — suggesting that their livelihoods and contributions can be set aside when it is most convenient. This was quickly evident on social media, where rank-and-file mariners openly wondered if they’d soon be out of a job.

Just as importantly, repeated waivers inject instability into the marketplace and erode confidence in U.S. maritime policy. Capital does not flow into uncertainty. If cargo can be diverted at will to foreign-flag vessels, investors will simply take their money elsewhere. The result is predictable: fewer U.S.-flag ships, diminished shipyard activity, and a shrinking mariner pool — harming the very industrial base and sealift capability this country depends on.

Moreover, there is no credible evidence that Jones Act waivers deliver any meaningful or measurable relief for American consumers at the pump. Global oil prices – not domestic shipping laws — drive fuel costs.

The Jones Act has protected U.S. national, economic and homeland security for more than century. It remains the most important maritime law in the United States. Globally, it is considered the gold standard of cabotage laws, among the more than 100 other nations that also maintain such regulations.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD fully stands behind the Jones Act, and objects to waivers; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jones Act continues to enjoy strong bipartisan support along with unwavering backing from our military leaders. It is a vital tool and should be treated as such.

MICHAEL SACCO: REMEMBERING AN ALL-TIME GREAT

Although our executive board met in 2024 and 2025, this is our first convention in many decades without Mike Sacco at the helm.

Mike passed away in late 2023, at age 86 and not quite a full year into an incredibly well-earned retirement. He had served as president of both the MTD and his home union, the Seafarers, from 1988 until early 2023, a period spanning nearly 35 years.

Mike was one-in-a-million. His work ethic, street smarts and business savvy were unsurpassed. So were his love for the Labor Movement and his dedication to our wellbeing. When Mike said he viewed us as more of a family than an organization, he meant it.

And, much in the way we often tend to demand the most from family and our closest friends, Mike steadily pushed us to grow and to deliver. In that regard, it's fitting that he was an avid football fan. The very best top-level coaches typically are known for helping their players exceed beyond what they thought was possible. Similarly, those leaders often exude charisma, and work so hard themselves that their players don't want to let them down. Across the board, Mike fits that description.

We would be remiss in not mentioning Mike's equally fervent dedication to faith, family and country. He never missed a mass, always had time for family, and believed in the American Dream. An Air Force veteran, Mike devoted himself to the jobs and job security of his members, so that they could pursue their own aspirations.

It is with a mix of gratitude and sadness that we extend this final formal remembrance of our leader, mentor, friend and brother.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the entire MTD family will adhere to the lessons that Mike taught us over so many years, and we will continue striving to live up to the incredibly high standards he embodied.

IT'S TIME TO ENACT THE SHIPS ACT

It's no secret that the "M" in MTD stands for Maritime, and right now, Maritime is standing up for the SHIPS Act. Passage of the SHIPS Act, co-sponsored by Congressman John Garamendi (D) from California and Congressman Trent Kelly (R) of Mississippi, along with Senator Mark Kelly (D) of Arizona and Senator Todd Young (R) of Indiana, can be considered the top priority of the maritime industry.

As stated by Congressman Kelly: "We are a great nation because we are a great maritime nation. But for years, we've fallen behind in providing the maritime industry with the resources it needs. If we want to restore America's maritime strength, it will take robust investment in our shipbuilding industry in both military and commercial. We need to put more American-built ships in the water — ships that carry goods, support our economy, and strengthen our security. We also must maintain those ships and ensure we have the workforce to crew and support U.S.-flagged vessels with American workers."

The bill has solid backing from both sides of the aisle, as stated by Congressman Garamendi: "I am encouraged to see continued bipartisan consensus on the need to strengthen America's maritime industry. The SHIPS Act will do exactly that. We are committed to securing passage of this legislation and to continuing the vital work of revitalizing our maritime sector."

Among many other benefits to the maritime industry, the SHIPS Act would, "Establish a national goal of expanding the U.S.-flag international fleet by 250 ships in 10 years by creating the Strategic Commercial Fleet Program, which would facilitate the development of a fleet of commercially operated, U.S.-flagged, American crewed, domestically built merchant vessels that can operate competitively in international commerce."

That translates to a lot of new, good-paying, secure union jobs. Even without mentioning that the SHIPS Act would require higher percentages of cargo be transported by U.S.-flag vessels, establish tax credits for shipyard investments, reduce red tape and increase support to our nation's maritime academies, the new jobs alone would be enough to make this the focus of maritime industry.

It is also worth noting that despite its abbreviated title, this bill would benefit all components of American maritime, not just shipbuilding. The full title — Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security for America Act — doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, but our bottom line is that this is the most comprehensive maritime legislation in more than half a century.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils stand wholeheartedly in support of the SHIPS Act, and will continue working for its swift and definitive passage into law.

SUPPORT FEDERAL WORKERS

In mid-April, Secretary Pete Hegseth issued a directive to immediately terminate collective bargaining agreements across the Department of Defense. This move, instituted under Executive Order 14251, strips union rights from more than 300,000 civilian employees, including many members of MTD-affiliated unions. That is the same executive order issued early in the current Trump administration — a severely misguided instruction that led to legal challenges and multiple court rulings, some in favor of workers. Overall, the EO affects around one million union members, though its initial enforcement was sporadic.

We are working closely with the AFL-CIO and with other allies to formulate the best possible strategic response to the administration's latest union-busting attack, which ostensibly was based on the misguided assertion that it would boost national security.

The Union Veterans Council, part of the AFL-CIO, pointed out that nearly half of the workers who are losing their union representation are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. Craig Romanovich, executive director of the council, stated, "This isn't about national security; it's a direct assault on the very people who have already sacrificed for this country. Secretary Hegseth is treating veteran workers like a line-item expense to be cut rather than the backbone of our national defense. By ripping up these contracts, the administration is stripping veterans of the workplace protections, fair pay, and safety standards they earned through years of service both in and out of uniform."

Let's be crystal clear about the administration's motives. Part of it is blatant attempted payback for public-sector union support of the Democratic candidate in the prior election, while the rest is — wait for it — a page straight out of Project 2025. You know, that document we were told the Republican candidate knew nothing about.

No one knows how this fight will play out, but we intend to win. And despite the roadblocks ahead, we do have bipartisan backing.

For instance, late last year, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass the Protect America's Workforce Act, a bill that would restore collective bargaining rights to all those who were attacked via the executive order. We are not kidding ourselves about the legislation's overall prospects, but there is legitimate significance attached to the bill signifying the only time the House had voted to overturn a Trump executive order during his second term.

Whether it's via the courts or the halls of Congress or both, permanently restoring federal workers' collective bargaining rights is a top priority of the MTD.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils unconditionally oppose Executive Order 14251. We will do everything in our power to overturn or otherwise get rid of it, for the good of the United States and its workers.

SUPPORT FOR DOT AND MARAD

While it is no secret that the Maritime Trades Department hasn't seen eye-to-eye with the administration on issues including the unionized federal workforce and Jones Act waivers, we are grateful for the consistent support and forward-thinking leadership at the Department of Transportation. Most prominently, this includes DOT Secretary Sean Duffy and Maritime Administrator Steve Carmel.

Secretary Duffy and Administrator Carmel are doing excellent work promoting American maritime. They have clearly and consistently expressed why our country needs a strong pool of U.S. citizen seafarers, viable domestic shipbuilding capability, and laws that consistently generate cargo for the American-flag fleet.

Moreover, they have demonstrated a firm commitment to revitalizing this critical industry.

Perhaps most notably, they both also have shown an eagerness to listen – something that can be regrettably rare in the nation's capital.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils are grateful for the hard work our Transportation Secretary and Maritime Administrator; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we pledge to continue closely working with them in support of efforts to restore America's maritime dominance.

IT KEEPS GETTING BETTER IN A UNION

More people than ever before are starting to realize that it's better in a union. Each year, more Americans are joining existing unions and organizing to unionize their workplaces.

Americans are much more supportive of unions than at any time in recent history. For decades, there was an even divide amongst Americans in their relative support of Labor unions and big business. Now, U.S. residents are more likely to side with us than at any time in the past 60 years.

With nearly 7 in 10 Americans approving of Organized Labor, the streak of high support that began in 2021 is still going strong. Of the many possible explanations for the public's increasing support for unions, we believe that highly visible, broad, grassroots organizing campaigns; mounting dissatisfaction with income inequality; employers' reactions to the pandemic; uncertainty created by AI implementation; and the precarity of the job market created under the current administration has made it clear to many Americans that they lack protection in the workplace. This has influenced them to search for avenues to guard themselves and their livelihoods.

According to a Gallup poll published prior to Labor Day in 2025, 68% of U.S. adults approve of Labor unions. For the past five years, approval of Organized Labor has been in the 67% to 71% range, figures which have not been seen since the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Union membership has remained within the 14%–21% range for the past 25 years. 15% of adults in the United States live in a household with at least one resident who is a union member.

Labor union membership differs most by region and income. Those who live on the East Coast (14%), in the Midwest (12%), and in the Western United States (9%) are more likely than those in the South (6%) to report Labor union membership. U.S. adults with an annual household income of at least \$100,000 (11%) and those earning \$50,000 to less than \$100,000 (11%) are more likely than those earning under \$50,000 per year (7%) to be Labor union members.

Although public sympathy and appreciation have not yet translated into a higher share of workers forming unions, it is up to us to make the most of this groundswell. We must continue sharing ways that unions can benefit workers, educating people about what Labor unions do, and offering support to those who are trying to organize their own workplaces.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils vow to do our part to amplify positive sentiments toward Labor unions, and continue our advocating for, supporting, and providing resources for current union members and those who may be inspired to join.

PRIORITIZING SAFER WORKPLACES — SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE STATE OF WORKPLACE SAFETY

Labor organizations the world over take great measures to protect the rights of workers, including their ability to work in safe environments.

Significant workplace safety improvements have been made since the Occupational Safety and Health Act went into effect 56 years ago, but there is still more to accomplish.

The AFL-CIO's 35th annual report on workplace safety addresses the current administration's choices to cut staffing and divert funds away from policies and agencies tasked with protecting workers on the job and enforcing workplace safety laws.

Major points highlighted in the report include:

- Workplace hazards (many of which are preventable) kill approximately 140,000 workers each year in the United States. 5,070 workers died from traumatic injuries in 2024 and an estimated 135,000 die from occupational diseases each year, amounting to more than 380 workers each day.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is now in charge of 85% more establishments, 44% more workers and new hazards and technologies, but Congress has reduced its budget by 10% and staffing by 26%, including a 16% reduction in inspectors, bringing the number of inspectors at OSHA to a new low.
- Black workers still die on the job at a disproportionately higher rate than the national average.
- Latino workers continue to face the greatest risk of dying on the job in 2024, at a rate 30% higher than the national average. Of the Latino workers who died, 68.5% were immigrants, a larger percentage than in previous years.
- The rate of young worker deaths has nearly doubled since 2020, and workers aged 65 and older are nearly three times as likely to die on the job than other workers.
- Workplace injuries create an enormous burden on the economy, costing an estimated \$177 billion to \$354 billion a year.
- Underreporting is widespread, and the true toll of work-related injuries and illnesses is estimated to be between 5.0 million and 7.5 million each year in private industry.

American workers can focus their energies on innovation when they are protected from being maimed or falling ill on the job. This cannot happen without political will to prioritize the safety of our nation's workers. Job safety agencies must reinforce employers' responsibility to protect

workers under U.S. law and strengthen protections for workers facing higher job fatality, injury, and illness rates.

Additionally, unions will continue fighting for the protections that we have earned throughout the years. Every employee has the fundamental right to return home safely after ending their workday.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MTD, its affiliates and its Port Maritime Councils remain fully committed to ensuring safe workplaces for all.

IN MEMORIAM

As we in the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO plan 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:

Don Anderson

former Secretary-Treasurer of the Port Maritime Council of Southern California.

Nicholas "Nick" Celona

former Secretary-Treasurer of the San Francisco Bay Area and Vicinity Port Maritime Council.

James Conigliaro Sr

former Eastern Territory Vice President of the International Association of Machinists and MTD Executive Board Member.

Thomas Conway

former President of the United Steel, Paper & Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial & Service Workers International Union.

Gerard Dhooge

former President of the Maritime Port Council of Greater Boston and New England Area.

Thomas Donahue

former President of the American Federation of Labor Congress of Industrial Organizations.

John Flynn

former President of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers and MTD Executive Board Member.

Leo Gerard

former President of the United Steel, Paper & Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial & Service Workers International Union and MTD Executive Board Member.

Vice Admiral Albert "Al" Herberger (USN, ret)

former U.S. Maritime Administrator.

William "Bill" Lucy

former Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and MTD Executive Board Member.

Gerald McEntee

former President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Glennard "Glen" Middleton

former Executive Director of AFSCME Council 67 and MTD Executive Board Member.

George Quick

former Pilots Membership Group Vice President of the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots and ITF Representative to the International Maritime Organization.

Sophie Sacco

wife of the late MTD President Michael Sacco.

Walter Wise

former President of the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers and MTD Executive Board Member.





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