



# THE FEDERAL MARINER

MSC \* NOAA \* ARMY COE \* MARAD

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## OPM Data Breach Impacts Millions of Federal Workers

### *ACOE, MSC, NOAA, SUIBAN Bay Reserve Fleet Employees Must Take Action to Protect Against Identity Theft, Ensure Credit Rating and Security Clearances Remain Safe*

*Editor's note: This story is unfolding rapidly. The SIU receives updates almost each day; the most recent release from OPM was issued July 9. The union will continue to advise federal mariners about this massive breach through the Federal Mariner e-gram list serve, written stories in the Seafarers LOG and the quarterly Federal Mariner, on the SIU website and through Facebook and Twitter. If you would like to join the list serve please send your name and e-mail address to [siufedmariner@seafarers.org](mailto:siufedmariner@seafarers.org) or ask your Government Services Division representative for a contact sheet to complete and submit.*

By now most federal employees and retirees have heard about the significant Office of Personnel Management (OPM) data breach initially discovered in April 2015. During the course of the investigation of that incident, an additional, massive breach was discovered involving background investigation records.

On July 9, OPM announced that the personal data of 21.5 million people have been compromised including 19.7 million people (current and former employees, job applicants and contractors) who applied for a background checks. On July 10, OPM Director Katherine Archuleta resigned from her position as a result of the scandal.

This breach is also believed to impact spouses, partners or co-habitants of applicants whose names and personal information were provided in the course of a background check.

The type of information which has been compromised in the two incidents include Social Security numbers, date of birth, place of birth, residency history, and other information which may have been included as part of your background check (health, criminal and financial information). Employment history and fingerprints, if you were required to provide them as part of your background check may have also been compromised. As

part of the background investigation, user names and passwords you may have used to fill out the forms may have been breached.

Your agency and/or OPM are supposed to be contacting you via e-mail and or mail to inform you about the impact and about signing up via the internet for the various protections to which you are entitled (depending upon specific circumstances).

For employees impacted by the first breach (those involving personnel records), OPM has advised that you are automatically enrolled in full-service identity restoration which helps repair your identity should the information breached be used for fraudulent activity. Also, identity theft insurance will reimburse you for certain expenses if your identity is stolen.

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## Vessel Christenings Signal New Jobs for Mariners

A pair of vessel christenings earlier this year signified new jobs for members of the SIU Government Services Division.

The sixth of 10 joint high-speed vessels (JHSV) built for the U.S. Navy – the *USNS Brunswick* – was christened May 9 at the Austal USA shipyard in Mobile, Alabama. Additionally, a ceremony for the mobile landing platform (MLP) *USNS Lewis B. Puller* took place Feb. 7 at General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego (a union shipyard), with SIU Assistant Vice President Chet Wheeler in attendance.

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., delivered the principal address at the *Puller* christening, along with fellow speakers Rear Adm. Thomas Shannon, commander of the Military Sealift Command (MSC); Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, deputy chief of naval operations for warfare systems; and Allison Stiller, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for ships.

The *Puller* is expected to be used as an afloat forward staging base.

Martha Puller Downs, daughter of ship's namesake, the late Lewis B. Puller, served as the vessel's sponsor and broke the ceremonial champagne bottle against the hull. Downs said that her father would have wanted her to specifically thank the thousands of welders, electricians, painters and other workers who built the ship. And she said it will serve as a fitting remembrance of Puller, who enjoys a legendary status in the Marine Corps.

"This ceremony not only honors a true Marine hero and legend, but also the men and women who have worked so diligently to bring this ship from concept to reality," said Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus the day before the event. "It is because of their efforts that the future *USNS Lewis B. Puller* will enable our maritime forces to accomplish myriad missions while operating forward just as Chesty did throughout his nearly 40-year career."

The *USNS Lewis B. Puller* will honor Lt. Gen. Lewis "Chesty" Burwell Puller, one of the most decorated Marines in the Corps, and the only Marine ever to receive the Navy Cross five times for heroism and gallantry in action. A Marine officer and enlisted man for 37 years, Lt. Gen. Puller served at sea or overseas for all but 10 of those years. Excluding medals from foreign governments, he earned a total of 14 personal decorations in combat, plus a long list of campaign medals, unit citation ribbons, and other awards. In addition to his Navy Crosses (the next-highest decoration to the Medal of



SIU Asst. VP Chet Wheeler (right) is pictured with Capt. Michael Taylor (USN), commander, MSC Pacific, at the *Puller* ceremony.

Honor for Naval personnel), he holds its Army equivalent, the Distinguished Service Cross.

Slated for delivery in September, the *Puller* is 785 feet long and has a maximum speed of 15 knots. It features a flight deck and what the Navy described as a "reconfigurable mission deck (that) will serve as an important flexible and transformational asset to the Navy as it can be reconfigured to support a wide variety of future operations."

Meanwhile, like its sister ships, the *Brunswick* is a 338-foot, shallow-draft aluminum catamaran described by the builder as "a multi-mission, non-combatant transport vessel characterized by its high volume, high speed, and flexibility."

"*Brunswick* displays American values of community, hospitality and resourcefulness at their very best," said Secretary Mabus at the ceremony. "I chose to name the joint high-speed vessel after *Brunswick* to honor those values and the men and women of the city, as well as the state of Georgia."

The new JHSV is the fourth ship named *Brunswick*, after the seaport city located on the southeast coast of Georgia. That city played an important role during World War II as the site of a 435-acre shipyard that employed up to 16,000 workers at its peak. The yard produced 99 Liberty ships by the end of the war.

"*Brunswick* is the result of the successful industry/DOD partnership that has developed between Austal USA, Military Sealift Command, and the Navy," said Craig Perciavalle, president of Austal USA. "We're very excited about how stable and mature the JHSV program has become as we prepare JHSV 6 for trials and delivery in the fall."

The ship's sponsor, Alma Booterbaugh, joined the office of the Secretary of the Navy in 1999. She has been a civil servant for more than 30 years with the federal government and is the recipient of the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award and three Navy Superior Civilian Service Awards. She was joined on stage by her daughter, the *USNS Brunswick*'s maid of honor, Brittany Booterbaugh.

More than 300 naval guests, civic leaders, community members and Austal employees attended the ceremony beneath the hull of the *Brunswick* in the yard's final assembly bay.

According to the Navy, the first *Brunswick* was a lightship that served in the Navy during World War I. The second *Brunswick* was a patrol frigate that escorted convoys across the Atlantic during World War II. The third ship to bear the name was a salvage and rescue tug that served the U.S. Navy from 1972 to 1996.

The newest version and the other JHSVs "are ideal for fast, intra-theater transportation of troops, military vehicles, supplies and equipment," the Navy reported. "These ships are capable of transporting 600 short tons 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots with berthing space for up to 104 personnel and airline-style seating for up to 312. JHSVs have a 20,000 square-foot open-mission deck and a flight deck to support day and night launch and recovery operations, providing U.S. forces added mobility and flexibility. They can operate in a variety of roles to include supporting overseas contingency operations, conducting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, supporting special operations forces and supporting emerging joint seabasing concepts."

Upon delivery to MSC, the *Brunswick* will have a core crew of 22-26 civilian mariners with military mission personnel embarking as necessary.

## President's Column

### SIU Protects Federal Mariners

Solidarity. Protection. Support. These are some of the words many federal mariners say they think of when they hear the word "union." I'm always glad to hear that because the Seafarers International Union works each day to protect federal mariners in their professional as well as their personal lives.

In addition to offering useful information, the stories in this edition of the Federal Mariner provide a good look at what the SIU does to protect and support members of our Government Services Division.

The lead story covers the massive data breach that's affecting tens of millions of federal workers. This breach may impact you and your family. If your personal information has been stolen and fraudulently used to create a false identity it could create chaos in your personal and professional life.



Michael Sacco

The SIU and other unions are working together and working hard to protect our respective memberships. Some of those efforts are made through a key organization named the Federal Workers Alliance, which pools resources in order to better stand up for federal workers' rights. Other efforts are SIU-specific, but in each case, we're working every day to make sure this breach is resolved in a way that safeguards your information moving forward.

Something else we've reported about in the past – and worked on for decades – is habitability for our mariners. This is a hugely important issue to every mariner. We've been very aggressive in standing up for our members' safety, and have worked hard to ensure that quarters are safe and habitable -- and also have strived to make sure when quarters are less than standard, mariners receive habitability pay. The new JHSVs are a great example. Mariners are receiving habitability payments because we secured it.

Meanwhile, I hope you'll read all the articles in this current edition, but in particular I would also call your attention to the piece on how to secure your benefits. Over the past 12 months we have lost a few shipmates. It is always distressing to get news of an unexpected passing. Families suffer greatly when an event like this happens. In times of crisis the SIU is able to help families cope. Dues-paying SIU members are eligible for a life insurance policy which can be very helpful when a paycheck stops. Other advice and support is also available from the union's legal department and our Government Services Division representatives for mariners who belong to the SIU.

The same is true if you are injured while on duty and need help with a worker's comp claim or need support to get medical care or assistance home from a forward-deployed area. The SIU has stepped up many times when we were aware that mariners did not receive appropriate treatment and the correct attention to make sure they got home quickly and safely.

Another important story involves so-called right-to-work laws. There's an important parallel between those laws and the law that governs employees throughout the federal workforce. The bottom line is that right-to-work laws mean employees may only need to pay lower dues or no dues even though they reap the benefits of union representation in the workplace. Government data shows year after year that unionized workers (on average) earn more money and have better benefits than unrepresented workers and have safer and fairer workplaces. So why should some workers get a free ride? They shouldn't. In the bigger picture, the need for strong unions has never been more critical. Being a federal mariner is not easy. Work is sometimes dangerous and forward-deployed mariners make many personal sacrifices.

Our nation's civil service is often under attack from those who have little idea about the important work you do. Government shutdowns, furloughs and trying to balance the federal budget by taking away federal employee benefits are challenges you and the SIU must face every day. This is where solidarity comes in. All federal mariners need a strong union and the SIU needs your support.

### Seafarers International Union Directory

Michael Sacco, *President*

Augustin Tellez, *Executive Vice President*

David Heindel, *Secretary-Treasurer*

George Tricker, *Vice President Contracts*

Kermett Mangram,  
*Vice President Government Services*

Chester Wheeler,  
*Asst. Vice President Government Services*

## SIU Mariners, Coast Guard Rescue Boaters

Members of the SIU Government Services Division came to the rescue May 14 when a disabled sailboat began taking on water some 50 miles off the coast of Ocean City, Maryland.

Shortly after 6 a.m., Seafarers and other mariners aboard the Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE-12) received a distress call from a sailboat, the S/V Solarus. The McLean was only about 10 minutes away when the two boaters reported that their craft was taking on more water than their bilge could pump out. The McLean sailed towards the disabled boat while contacting the United States Coast Guard and apprising them of the situation.

Once the cargo ship was on the scene, the Solarus reported a two-foot long crack in the hull. The McLean launched a fast rescue boat with a pump towards the damaged vessel. It was then determined that the Solarus should be moved next to the McLean, in order to shield the craft from the choppy seas while it was repaired.

After the water had been pumped from the boat, the damage was assessed and a list of materials necessary for repair was passed to the deck department. Those mariners then gathered the items, and lowered them down to the Solarus in order for repairs to begin. Once the hull was temporarily patched, the crew of the McLean refueled the craft and cooked a hot breakfast for the sailboat's crew.

The two vessels then moved in tandem towards a Coast Guard rescue team. After Coast Guard members had boarded the Solarus to escort the sailboat, and once the repaired craft was in radio contact with



Mariners on board a fast rescue boat prepare to be lowered from the deck of the USNS William McLean to aid the damaged S/V Solarus.

scene within 10 minutes to provide dewatering pump and monitor the deteriorating situation. Your dedicated support and timely response ensured the safety of two mariners in distress. Your crew quickly responded with a rescue and assistance team enabling the Solarus' crew to patch their two-foot hole and dewater their vessel. I commend you for your professionalism and flexibility."

The captain also praised the efforts of the mariners, saying, "The crew performed flawlessly and was ready to go on 'no notice' to help out the two mariners and their sailboat."

### With CIVMARS Aboard the Thomas Jefferson



Union members met with SIU VP Government Services Kermett Mangram (back row, left) in mid-June aboard the NOAA ship *Thomas Jefferson* in Norfolk, Virginia. A few of those Seafarers are pictured here.



"We have a union now, so your method of handling grievances will have to change, Mr. Hamilton."

# SIU-Crewed NOAA Survey Ships Deploy for Arctic Charting

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) officially launched its 2015 Arctic hydrographic survey season June 8 in Kodiak, Alaska, in a World Ocean Day ceremony which showcased the deployment of the Seafarers-crewed NOAA ships *Rainier* and *Fairweather*.

In remarks directed to the crews of NOAA ships, including members of the SIU Government Services Division, Vice Admiral Michael S. Devany, NOAA deputy undersecretary for operations, said, "Most Arctic waters that are charted were surveyed with obsolete technology, with some of the information dating back to Captain Cook's voyages, long before the region was part of the United States. Your work this summer is a crucial mission in our determination to make the Arctic seas safer for shipping, sustenance, and marine life."

In anticipation of growing vessel traffic in the Arctic, NOAA is increasing its charting activities in the region to help ensure navigation safety. With that in mind, the *Rainier* and *Fairweather* departed Kodiak to begin a summer of hydrographic surveying projects in the Arctic. NOAA will use the surveys, which will measure ocean depths and search for dangers to navigation, to update nautical charts for Alaska's waters.

Specifically, for this year's Arctic survey projects the NOAA ships will collect new charting data for Port



Chief Bosun Jim Kruger (front) works with Jason Kinyon and Lindsey Houska on the Seafarers-crewed *Rainier* before the vessel deploys. (Photo courtesy NOAA)

Clarence, Kotzebue Sound, and Point Hope. The vessels will also survey the seafloor as they transit to and from the project areas, collecting data along a potential Arctic shipping route from Unimak Island to the Chukchi Sea,

as proposed in the U.S. Coast Guard's Port Access Route Study for the region.

This summer's projects were the focus of the deployment ceremony, which was attended by federal, tribal, state and local dignitaries and featured a performance by the Kodiak Alutiiq Dancers.

NOAA's Office of Coast Survey, which manages NOAA's surveys and creates the nation's nautical charts, will also manage a survey project conducted by TerraSond under a federal contract. The private company will check the extent of the Prince of Wales shoals, to help vessels transiting to and from points in the Chukchi and Bering Seas.

The Arctic projects are in addition to the NOAA ships' 2015 non-Arctic Alaskan survey projects for Chatham Strait, Shumagin Islands, Kodiak, and west Prince of Wales Island.

Altogether, NOAA's hydrographic project areas for Alaska cover 2,800 square nautical miles, plus the 12,000 linear nautical miles for the shipping route project.

NOAA's Office of Coast Survey, originally formed by President Thomas Jefferson in 1807, maintains the nation's nautical charts, surveys the coastal seafloor, responds to national maritime emergencies, and searches for underwater obstructions and wreckage.

## CIVMAR NOTES

### CMPI 610 Printed Copies For SIU Dues-Paying Members

One of the most significant accomplishments of the last five years was the negotiation of the revised CMPI 610 – Hours of Work and Premium Pay. An excellent understanding of these rules ensures that CIVMARS will be paid fairly and correctly every time you earn overtime, premium pay and penalty pay. MSC chose not to supplement the printed copies it first distributed when the instruction was initially rolled out.

Currently, the CMPI 610 is supposed to be accessible on the vessel computer systems and available for unlicensed CIVMARS to review. However, not all unlicensed CIVMARS may have access to the document. For much easier and less time-consuming access, the SIU has re-printed the CMPI 610 and is making them available to SIU dues-paying members.

The documents will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. After all the copies of CMPI 610 have been distributed the union will determine whether more will be printed this year. They are being distributed at the CSUs. If you'd like to have a copy sent to your ship or your home, email your SIU Government Services Division representative. Please include your mailing address and your union book number.

### Retro Comp-Time-for-Travel Update

As has been reported in previous issues of the Federal Mariner, CIVMARS working for MSC between 2008 and now are entitled to a retroactive Comp Time for Travel benefit. The SIU is negotiating with MSC for a retroactive benefit and we hope the issue will be resolved by the end of the year. CIVMARS will be updated as the negotiations continue.

### Understanding Your Benefits and How to Secure Them

A significant benefit of being an SIU dues-paying member is the opportunity to access a \$4,000 life insurance policy. While this topic is difficult to think about, accidents and illnesses occur and protecting your family in a time of crisis and loss is a very important issue.

Over the past 12 months the SIU has been notified of the untimely deaths of several mariners in the SIU Government Services fleet. Unfortunately, some mariners did not have beneficiary cards on file, making distribution of the benefit more complicated for their surviving family members.

In addition to the life insurance benefits, as an SIU dues-paying member, in the event of a federal mariner's death, your survivors may also call the SIU legal department to get guidance and resources about how to begin the many steps needed to deal with estate probate issues, which may save time and money.

As federal mariners you are entitled to many types of benefits. If you are a veteran, there are benefits available to your family members in addition to those offered by the SIU and the federal government.

Do you check your leave and earning statements on a regular basis to make sure that your agency is deducting the correct premiums for your life and health insurance? Errors in premium amounts and deductions have been made and are very difficult to correct posthumously. Take a moment to check your leave and earning statement to make sure the benefits you believe you have selected to protect your loved ones will be available if anything happens to you.

One of the best gifts you can give your family members is organized paperwork which is easily accessible to them. Having a cyber will with all your accounts and passwords is critical today when so many transactions and accounts are completed online and protected by passwords which may be unknown to your survivors.

Also important is to leave any names and contact information of attorneys who assisted you in the preparation of your will, any person who helped in your financial planning, tax preparers and other friends or advisors who may have knowledge of assets and your wishes for what to do in the event of your death.

Here are addresses for two websites with tips about document organization to help your family save many hours of reconstructing the paperwork to have access to important financial and health care benefits to which they may be entitled should something happen to you.

<http://www.amyvolk.com/organizing-documents-in-case-you-die>

<http://lifehacker.com/5817021/in-case-of-emergency-how-to-organize-your-important-records-in-a-master-information-kit>

### OPM Data Breach Affects Millions

Continued from page 1

Again, according to OPM if you have been impacted by part of the larger breach you will receive the above protections including the identity monitoring for minor children, continuous credit monitoring and fraud monitoring services beyond credit files. For this breach you do need to register with CSID. Information is available at OPM's cyber security resource center at [www.opm.gov/cybersecurity](http://www.opm.gov/cybersecurity).

The SIU is advocating for all federal mariners on a number of related fronts. The union has been in touch with ACOE, MSC, NOAA and SUIBAN Bay Reserve Fleet to see how the agency is responding and whether more needs to be done to notify those in the units.

The SIU is a member of the Federal Workers Alliance (FWA). The FWA is in communication with OPM representatives on a regular basis to ensure that the promised protections are implemented. We have been advised that there may be problems with the credit protection companies offering these services. We are also on watch to address that issue. The FWA has sent a letter to President Obama seeking greater protections as well, and the establishment of a task force with labor representatives, defense/intelligence experts, agency leaders and private-sector technology experts with authority to compile a list of further recommendations.

Notifications will be coming via U.S. mail to impacted employees and we are also seeking information from each agency about notification via e-mail.

#### What You Can Do Now

■ In the January 2013 issue of the Federal Mariner and in subsequent issues, the SIU encouraged members to remain vigilant about identity theft and protecting yourself while online. Here is some guidance from past articles and from other sources:

■ [www.onguardonline.gov](http://www.onguardonline.gov) Created by a 16-agency partnership to protect federal workers from identity theft and contains many other useful articles.

■ [www.IdentityTheft.gov](http://www.IdentityTheft.gov) To learn how to set up protections and get a free credit report.

■ Change your logins and passwords for your TSP account. To request a new pin from TSP you can call the TSP Thrift Line (1-877-968-3778). Follow the directions to change your pin number.

■ If you have used one login and password for all other important accounts change those as well. Try to develop passwords that contain numbers and alphabetical characters along with special characters. Try not to use the same password for other accounts.

■ Keep an eye out for your notification package from OPM/and or your agency. If you are forward-deployed ask someone at home to look for this important mail.

■ For MSC forward-deployed mariners the SIU has already proposed that once a forward-deployed CIVMAR gets instructions on how to sign up for protection, they be allowed to use vessel computers that will not "time out" as CIVMARS try to register for the OPM credit protections. These negotiations are ongoing.

### Submissions Wanted

Attention all ACOE, NOAA, SBRF-MARAD and MSC federal mariners: Your work on behalf of our government is vital. Your union appreciates all you do in your workplace and on behalf of our nation.

We want your voices to be heard! We want to make sure we are writing about issues and topics that are of importance to all our Government Services units. Please send your comments, pictures and requests for coverage to [siufedmariner@seafarers.org](mailto:siufedmariner@seafarers.org)

We will do our best to print your photos and publish articles based on your requests.

Be active. Stay involved. Support the *Federal Mariner* and your union!

# 'Right to Work' Really Means Lower Wages

According to a new Economic Policy Institute (EPI) study, the most recent data confirms what the SIU and other labor unions have always known: In states with so-called right-to-work (RTW) laws, wages are lower than in states without such laws. The study concludes that the relationship between RTW states and lower wages is still statistically significant, even after controlling for various demographic and socioeconomic variables.

The EPI is a respected, non-partisan think tank based in Washington, D.C.

RTW laws allow non-dues-paying workers many of the benefits of representation without doing their part to help support the union. That means, for example, a non-dues-paying employee benefits from the same medical coverage negotiated by the union for everyone in the bargaining unit. Similarly, if a worker who doesn't pay dues were to have a grievance, the union would have to take up that beef, using union resources just as they would for a dues-paying member.

There are 25 RTW states, primarily in the mid-west, south and southwest.

A similar system of representation is used throughout the federal government for civil service employees – including federal mariners. An SIU team represents mariners in four agencies: SUIAN Bay Reserve Fleet, ACOE, NOAA and MSC. Employees who do not pay union dues receive some of the same benefits that dues-paying members receive as the result of a federal law. Additional benefits – representational and financial – are available to SIU dues-paying members. According to the findings by Senior Economist and Director of Health Policy Research Elise Gould, Ph.D., and Research Assistant Will Kimball, wages in states with RTW laws are 3.1 percent lower than those in non-RTW states. That translates to an average of \$1,558 less per year, but could mean much more in some areas.

The findings also confirm an earlier study that proved the benefits of unions extend beyond their members. On a state-wide level, wages were higher in non-RTW states, and not just for union members. As stated in the report, "Where unions are strong, compensation increases even for workers not covered by any union contract, as non-union employers face competitive pressure to match union standards. Likewise, when unions are weakened by RTW laws, all of a state's workers feel the impact."

In conclusion, the report found that even after factoring in all reasonably possible outside variables, the correlation between lower wages in RTW states and the law was undeniable.

In our industry federal mariner wages are developed using the wage rates negotiated in collective bargaining contracts for private-sector seafarers. In the past the SIU has provided information to mariners about the link between the private maritime industry and federal-sector wages. We will continue to do so in future articles and meetings with mariners.

"It's abundantly clear that right-to-work laws are negatively correlated with workers' wages," says Gould. "Our model uses widely-agreed upon variables, and holds up under a series of tests to ensure that the model is sound and not being skewed by the inclusion or exclusion of particular variables or estimate technique."

The study is part of the Economic Policy Institute's Raising America's Pay project, a multiyear research and public education initiative to make wage growth an urgent national policy priority. Raising America's Pay seeks to explain wage and benefit patterns – and the role of labor market policies and practices in suppressing pay – and identify policies that will generate broad-based wage growth.

*Editor's note: The RTW study also includes this summary, which addresses whether such laws truly are about freedom or more about stopping employees from engaging in their rights to have strong union representation:*

Corporate lobbies advocate RTW with the goal of restricting unions. There are many organizations that, like unions, require membership dues.

For instance, condominium or homeowners associations similarly require dues of their members. A homebuyer can't choose to live in a condominium development without paying the association fees.

Yet the national corporate lobbies supporting RTW are not proposing a "right to live where you want" law. They are focused solely on restricting employees' organizations.

Unions in RTW states are the only organizations in the country forced to provide benefits for free, and banned from requiring those who enjoy the benefits to pay their fair share of the costs of creating them.

Indeed, employer associations themselves refuse to live by the same rules they seek to impose on unions.

In Owensboro, Kentucky, the local Building Trades Council decided to withdraw its membership in the local Chamber of Commerce, but asked if it could still receive full member benefits even though it would no longer be paying dues. Absolutely not, answered the Chamber.

"It would be against Chamber by-laws and policy to consider any organization or business a member without dues being paid. The vast majority of the Chamber's annual revenues come from member dues, and it would be unfair to the other 850-plus members to allow an organization not paying dues to be included in member benefits."

This, then, appears to be the true aim of RTW, and may explain why some corporate lobbies continue advocating for it even though it doesn't make sense as an economic policy and it hurts workers. It appears that the main goal of RTW may be not to create jobs or give workers more freedom, but instead to make it harder for workers to have an effective voice in negotiating with their employer.

All federal mariners gain benefits with participation in a workplace with effective unions. You can make a difference. You can protect yourself and contribute to the collective good. Support the SIU – yourself and your shipmates – with your membership.

*This benefit is for union members only*



Here's one more thing  
Union families can share.

## How to Become an SIU Member

Joining the SIU is easy. The union's website – [www.seafarers.org](http://www.seafarers.org) – includes printable PDF versions of forms that mariners may use to request and authorize payroll deductions for labor organization dues. The forms are posted at:

[www.seafarers.org/memberbenefits/civmar.asp](http://www.seafarers.org/memberbenefits/civmar.asp)

Forms are also available under "union forms" in the SIU membership tab.

### Contact Information

**Asst. Vice President Government Services Chet Wheeler:**

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**Government Services Fleet Representative Sam Spain:**

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Email: [sspain@seafarers.org](mailto:sspain@seafarers.org)

**For contact with SIU:**

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