

H.R. 8515 To Promote and Recruit the United States Maritime Industry Workforce

Single Subject Statement: The bill enhances the U.S. maritime workforce and industry.

Executive Summary: The U.S. Maritime industry needs support. Less than 80 oceangoing ships fly the American flag in international commerce. The U.S. shipbuilding industrial base lacks the capacity to produce oceangoing vessels at scale. And the number of qualified mariners is falling. The U.S. Merchant Marine will be relied upon to transport critical goods and military cargo during a time of war, and a strong U.S. Merchant Marine will help to strengthen American supply chains during peacetime.

This legislative proposal represents a comprehensive approach to revitalizing the U.S. Merchant Marine along four primary lines of effort: 1) establishing a Maritime Security Trust Fund; 2) supporting and incentivizing an increase of U.S. flagged vessels; 3) supporting the U.S. shipbuilding industry; and 4) expanding and strengthening maritime workforce development to boost mariner and shipyard worker recruitment, training, and retention.

Findings:

- (1) Strategic sealift, made up of civilian, Government, and commercial vessels and mariners, is a critical capability for executing our country's maritime defense strategy and wartime and peacetime economy.
- (2) Ensuring a modern and ready capability will require significant investment, policy prioritization, and the innovation of the American people.
- (3) The United States Government must take all measures necessary to ensure that sufficient military, civil, and commercial resources will be available with assured access to meet defense deployment and essential economic activities for our nation in times of crisis, war, or peace.
- (4) The United States must be prepared to respond unilaterally to national security threats and understand and plan for contingencies in which treaty allies of the United States must support and augment United States sealift.
- (5) Maintaining the capacity to conduct sealift is vital to national security and the American way of life.
- (6) A United States-flag commercial shipping fleet crewed with citizen mariners, competitive in domestic and international trade and civil fleets participating in the United States peacetime economy underwrite American security and survival in times of crisis and war.

Purpose:

Address the shortage of workers in the maritime sector and stimulate growth in the United States merchant marine and shipbuilding industries by providing funding for a comprehensive marketing, recruiting, and public relations campaign. Expanding and nurturing a robust maritime workforce enhances United States national security and strategic sealift readiness; and create a more favorable domestic and global maritime environment for United States-flagged shipping, shipbuilding, maritime logistics, maritime workforce, and naval power, contributing to assured access to the world's oceans free from coercion from strategic competitors.