

RESOLUTION 25

Maritime Labor Convention

Submitted by American Maritime Officers, International Longshore and Warehouse Union, International Longshoremen's Association, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association and Seafarers International Union
Referred to the Legislation and Policy Committee

WHEREAS, in this day and age in which businesses are consolidating around the world, one global effort is under way to bring together the various rules of the seas to the benefit of mariners, ship owners and governments alike; and

WHEREAS, the Consolidated Maritime Labor Convention (MLC), adopted by the International Labor Organization in 2006, seeks to combine into one document the minimum standards required to provide the satisfactory conditions of employment for the world's seafarers; and

WHEREAS, more than 50 different international standards come together into one single document, which has been dubbed by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) as a "bill of rights for seafarers"; and

WHEREAS, provisions within the MLC include:

- An employment agreement guaranteeing decent shipboard working and living conditions that would be signed by both the mariner and the shipowner (or its representative);
- Monthly pay in full and in accordance with the employment agreement and any applicable collective agreement;
- A 14-hour work limit within any 24-hour period, and 72-hour limit within any seven-day period;

- Shipowner must pay to repatriate mariner in case of illness, injury, shipwreck, insolvency or ship sale;

- Specific requirements for living accommodations and recreational facilities aboard vessel;

- Access to prompt medical care when on board or in port; and

- Measures for effective enforcement and compliance include a certification system for labor standards; and

WHEREAS, those involved in crafting the convention believe it is a winning proposal for all because it lays out a comprehensive set of basic maritime labor principles and rights for the mariners, including the right to make complaints both aboard ship and in port; and

WHEREAS, the MLC provides the seafarer with clear identification of just who the shipowner with overall responsibility is; and

WHEREAS, the MLC offers shipowners a more level playing field to ensure fair competition while marginalizing substandard operations and allows the shipowner the ability to crew a better-protected and more efficient workforce; and

WHEREAS, the MLC contains minimum standards that are well within current industry

practices and should be easily met by most owners; and

WHEREAS, the MLC simplifies reporting obligations for national governments into one convention rather than many; and

WHEREAS, it provides wider enforcement powers on all ships and protects against unfair competition from substandard ships through its “no more favorable treatment” provision for ships of non-ratifying countries; and

WHEREAS, the one thing blocking all this from being implemented is the lack of ratification by the nations of the world—including the United States and Canada; and

WHEREAS, U.S.-flag and Canadian-flag vessels already meet the obligations within the

convention, yet many of the ships sailing into U.S. and Canadian ports do not; and

WHEREAS, the ITF, with the assistance of many AFL-CIO affiliates, has been fighting for decades against these substandard ships and for the mariners aboard them through its flag-of-convenience campaign; and

WHEREAS, these flag-of-convenience vessels operate through a deceptive patchwork of paper trails in which mariners barely subsist at sea and unfortunately receive less pay—when it is provided—than promised when they signed on;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO joins with its allies in the ITF to call upon the major maritime powers of the world—including the United States and Canada—in ratifying the Maritime Labor Convention.