



*A bold voice for transportation workers*

March 20, 2019

### **Support Maritime Security Program Funding in FY'20 THUD Appropriations**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I ask you to sign the bipartisan letter being circulated by Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Roger Wicker (R-MS) requesting the fully authorized level of \$300,000,000 for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) in the FY 2020 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development appropriations bill.

The Maritime Security Program is a critical component of our military sealift capability and the essential guarantee that trained U.S. citizen mariners will be available in times of crisis or disaster. The program provides a stipend to commercial shipping companies to continue to sail U.S.-flag vessels, at a fraction of the cost it would take the federal government to replicate similar maritime shipping capacity. The benefits of MSP to national security are clear — as evidenced by the fact that 90% of cargo shipped to military and rebuilding efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan were sent aboard dependable MSP vessels with skilled and well-trained U.S. crewmembers.

This capacity is indispensable to both our security and humanitarian efforts, but it is also a key element in promoting good middle class jobs in the maritime sector. In a world without a U.S. fleet, jobs currently performed by American mariners would be outsourced to countries without labor and safety protections, where mariners work under poor conditions for little pay. Support for MSP helps to ensure that the U.S. mariner pool remains robust, and that our nation will be able to preserve the existence of a domestic maritime industry and the substantial economic benefits it imparts.

For this reason we urge you to sign the Hirono-Wicker FY'20 MSP appropriations letter, which requests full funding of the program and will provide the necessary support for our military sealift capacity and the U.S. commercial maritime sector.

Staff contacts are below.

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

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Larry I. Willis, President / Greg Regan, Secretary-Treasurer



Sen. Wicker – [jake\\_rendon@wicker.senate.gov](mailto:jake_rendon@wicker.senate.gov)  
Sen. Hirono – [jed\\_d'ercole@hirono.senate.gov](mailto:jed_d'ercole@hirono.senate.gov)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry I. Willis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry I. Willis  
President