



M.E.B.A. President Don Keefe at left with MTD/SIU President Mike Sacco and ILA President Richie Hughes.



M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo at the MTD Convention along with Congressman Ed Pastor (D-AZ) and MM&P President Tim Brown.

Trumka Takes Lead of Labor Movement

Richard Trumka, who had served as AFL-CIO President John Sweeney's right hand man for the past 14 years, has taken over the top spot following his election at the Federation's 2009 Convention in Pittsburgh. Sweeney had announced his intended retirement earlier in the year and enthusiastically endorsed his longtime Secretary-Treasurer as his replacement. Trumka had served as President of the United Mine Workers prior to joining Sweeney at the Federation in late 1995.

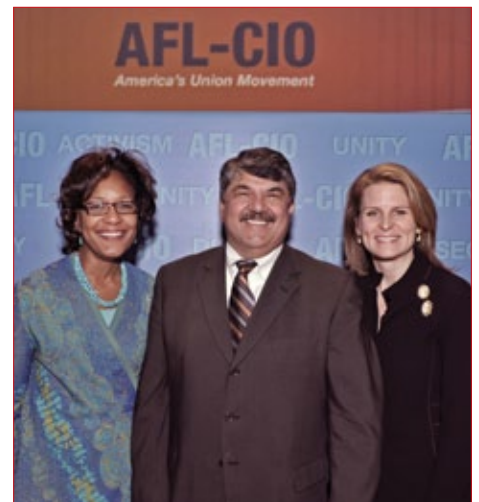
Liz Shuler becomes the new Secretary-Treasurer and, at 39 years old, is the youngest person to ever become an AFL-CIO officer. She had been the executive assistant to Electrical Workers (IBEW) President Edwin Hill. Arlene Holt Baker had been serving as the Federation's Executive Vice President since 2007 and was re-elected at this summer's Convention.

Addressing a large September gathering in Pittsburgh, including M.E.B.A. officials, Trumka reflected on his upbringing in a union family in western Pennsylvania and talked about the changes and challenges that the union movement confronts. "Even though the face of the American labor movement has changed, one thing hasn't: It's that the surest, the fastest, most effective way to lift workers and our families into the

middle-class is with the strength, that can only, only come with a union contract... Even though it wasn't the labor movement that got us into this mess, we are the people who are going to lead America out of it. But we can only do it if we seize this moment—we can only do it if we act now—we can only do it if we provide the leadership working Americans are demanding. Well, today I'm telling you that we will seize this moment. We will act, we will lead, and, by God, we will win! The American labor movement can turn our country around—and together that's exactly what we're going to do!"

Shuler promised she would manage the AFL-CIO's finances responsibly and transparently and make it a top priority to reach out to young workers to sustain unions for future generations. Holt Baker said that her mission would include passage of the Employee Free Choice Act and reaching out to a new generation of workers to give them a chance at the American dream.

The Trumka administration got off on a good foot as UNITE HERE President John Wilhelm announced that his union is reaffiliating with the Federation. The 250,000-member UNITE HERE was one of the unions that left the AFL-CIO in 2005 to join the "Change To Win" coalition.



AFL-CIO Executive V.P. Arlene Holt Baker, new President Richard Trumka and Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler were all elected to office at the September Convention.



M.E.B.A. Boston Representative Bill Campbell had the opportunity to speak with new Senator Paul Kirk (D-MA) at the Massachusetts AFL-CIO Convention. Sen. Kirk was appointed to fill the absence left by Ted Kennedy's death. He has announced that he will only hold the post until a new Senator is elected in the State's special election to be held on Jan. 19, 2010.

MTD Speakers Look Toward Strengthened Maritime Industry

As mentioned, M.E.B.A. took part in the AFL-CIO Convention and was represented by President Don Keefe and Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo. M.E.B.A., which is part of the Maritime Trades Department (AFL-CIO), also attended the MTD meetings that took place before the start of the AFL-CIO Convention. Led by President Mike Sacco, MTD has been an important advocate for the industry. M.E.B.A. was represented at the Convention by its five-person District Executive Committee (DEC), Political Director Mike Ingrao and Government Fleet Representative Randi Ciszewski who were all there as Delegates.

The new AFL-CIO President also spoke before the MTD and highlighted organized labor's priorities, most notably universal health care and labor law reform, as well as the need to preserve a viable North American maritime industry. Richard Trumka stressed maritime's integral role to the nation's defense and economy and pointed out that we must ensure the vitality of U.S.-flag shipping for the future. He reasserted his strong defense of the Jones Act and cargo preference calling them "non-negotiable demands."

Transportation Department Secretary Ray LaHood also spoke at the MTD Convention and emphasized his deep support for the industry while dedicating the majority of his remarks to the DOT's desire to help foster a workable short sea shipping system in this country that would create numerous

jobs for MTD unions while easing massive congestion on the nation's highways.

Vice Admiral Mark Harnitchek was among some of the other speakers before the MTD. The Deputy Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) vowed to continue TRANSCOM's excellent working relationship that is sustained through programs like the Maritime Security Act and the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement. In a sense, he said, these programs are like "the cycle of life." They sustain themselves through an industry-government partnership – the Department of Defense gets important strategic assets at a fraction of what they cost, and commercial operators get access to cargo, which amounts to \$10 billion a year.

Transportation Trades Dept. Keeps Up the 'Good Fight'



The TTD, led by President Ed Wytkind, has made a real impact in its pursuit of issues important to the M.E.B.A.

Another organization that has put together an impressive track record in its relentless battles on behalf of the M.E.B.A. and sister unions is the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents 32 member unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries. It is the transportation policy and legislative arm of the AFL-CIO. TTD has proven its effectiveness in amplifying M.E.B.A.'s voice in our dialogues with government agencies and in the halls of Congress as we seek to advance maritime matters important to our members. TTD has been valuable for us on a large range of concerns such as TWIC issues, short sea shipping and safety at sea including piracy.

Edward Wytkind has served as TTD's President since late 2003 and was the organization's Executive Director for 13 years previously. He recently sat down with the *Marine Officer* for an illuminating chat that further illustrates TTD's important mission.

M.O.: The TTD represents many different modes of transportation. What determines which issues and initiatives will be pursued? Some issues that are important to one mode may be opposed by another. How do you balance that out?

E.W.: Our agenda and policies are set by TTD's Executive Committee, of which M.E.B.A. President Don Keefe is a voting member. I appreciate the job Don has done to aggressively push the concerns and interests of M.E.B.A. members at TTD's table with all transportation union leaders.

When Congress takes up key legislation we work to advance reforms or maintain policies that are good for transportation workers. The strength of TTD is its member unions who participate in a process of finding consensus on the major policy challenges. The organization was created for the express purpose of creating a unified voice for transportation unions and their members. By presenting a united front before the United States Congress, the Executive Branch and independent government agencies we are bringing the collective power of millions of transportation workers to Washington and demanding more from those elected to represent and lead our nation. For almost 20 years transportation unions have done exactly that under the TTD umbrella.

M.O.: How does the TTD get things done – by pursuing legislation? What other avenues does the TTD go down to help effect beneficial change for the transportation industries?

E.W.: TTD reaches out to both Democrats and Republicans to represent the needs and views of transportation workers. We work hard on both sides of the aisle to build relationships with elected officials and their staffs to ensure they consider the impact of their decisions on working people. TTD's government affairs staff coordinates with the affiliates' staffs to ensure we are working to advance a common agenda.

We also participate in the federal rulemaking process and express our views before independent boards and commissions. We track and monitor the activities of key government agencies and we offer formal written proposals, where appropriate, as regulators consider important policy questions. Moreover, we work with affiliates to ensure we are advancing a unified voice on the major issues before federal agencies. Separately we ensure Congress understands the importance of asserting its oversight authority over government programs and policies that impact transportation workers.

We also testify before Congressional hearings. We provide written and oral testimony to specific Congressional committees and often get asked questions about frontline workers' experiences. This gives our unions a very public opportunity to communicate our concerns or support for a given issue. And it provides us an opportunity to advance the broad positions agreed to by the Executive Committee in front of key members of the House and Senate.

We also need more rank-and-file activism. Lawmakers appreciate hearing directly from their constituents about the needs and concerns of working people. An active M.E.B.A. membership in their communities only makes TTD stronger. TTD offers a periodic e-newsletter to inform and update transportation workers on the issues that affect you. Every e-newsletter offers a sample letter to send to Senators and Representatives that is easily customized and sent electronically to Capitol Hill. We focus on a different issue every time. So although the issue of that month may not be maritime-related, it is always transportation-related, and when workers support each other in solidarity we are all stronger. Sign up for the e-newsletter by going to www.ttd.org.

M.O.: What are some recent maritime-related issues that the TTD has helped get some movement on in recent years?

E.W.: We worked hard to make sure that a significant level of funds was dedicated to transportation in the economic stimulus bill, otherwise known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. In addition to the billions dedicated to other modes, the stimulus bill committed \$1.5 billion to transportation projects that will enhance intermodal transport. This includes ports, and we hope that grant money is addressing critical needs while also putting people back to work.

Along with M.E.B.A. and others, TTD has advocated successfully for increased port infrastructure funds. These funds are included in the House of Representative's surface transportation reauthorization bill. These funds will ultimately allow for additional dredging and capacity programs that will make today's ports more efficient for tomorrow's needs.

TTD has also worked to improve the background check process for the Transportation Worker Identification Credential, or TWIC. We have always said that no one wants vessels and ports to be secure more than the people who work in them every day. But this program has to actually improve security – not prevent non-terrorists from going to work. The background check process relies heavily on the FBI criminal background database, which is chock full of errors and incomplete information. We are working with lawmakers to improve this situation so that deserving people aren't prevented from going to work.

As the government transitioned to a new Administration at the beginning of the year, TTD led the effort to educate new staff and identify urgent issues and long-standing priorities. Generally, we asked the new Administration to support a strong U.S.-flag merchant marine and its key programs. We focused discussion on key programs such as the Maritime Security Program, as well as the Title XI loan program, which promotes growth of the industry by making favorable long-term financing to owners of vessels and shipyards.

We also focused our "transition" efforts with the new Administration on long-standing policy that we want to see retained and enforced, including cargo preference policies and the Jones Act. We have long advocated for cargo preference provisions, specifically for the Department of Defense and food aid. Because cargo is the lifeline of the merchant marine, our economic and national interests are best served by requiring that a percentage of government-generated cargo be carried on U.S.-flag vessels. We will fight to retain the provisions -- and fight to see them enforced.

In past years, we have fought to uphold and enforce the Jones Act, the nation's maritime cabotage law. The requirements in the Jones Act preserve a robust pool of civilian mariners capable of meeting the nation's sealift needs; generate three-fourths of all commercial U.S. shipbuilding opportunities; and ensure that over 70 percent of the ocean-going self-propelled vessels in the Jones Act fleet are useful to the military. We will continue to defend the Jones Act if and when maritime cabotage protection policies come under fire.

M.O.: What are some upcoming challenges?

E.W.: TTD will continue to seek out opportunities for greater investment in intermodal projects that will improve the flow of goods and commerce at our nation's seaports. Freight congestion is a huge problem, because time is money. We need to reduce chronic chokepoints at our nation's seaports, rail yards and intermodal centers where cargo is transferred. Our nation's freight rail carriers move 2.2 billion tons of goods every year and 95 percent of our foreign trade is moved by ship. Today, many arriving and departing containers sit at ports because there is inadequate landside infrastructure to move them. This "first mile" between port and land is an issue that must be addressed with federal resources and involvement. We need to promote better connectivity, which has long been a focus in ports around the world.

As we work to improve the background check process for TWIC, we will be working to combine the application process for the Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD) and the TWIC. Both credentials are required and issued by the federal government, and require near-identical information. We should combine the two processes and eliminate redundancy – saving workers time and effort.

We will continue to advocate for the Ferry Boat Discretionary (FBD) program, which funds the construction of ferry boats and ferry boat facilities. Additional funds – above and beyond what is available currently – are needed to provide transportation alternatives to the public and create high-quality jobs for American workers. Increased funding for ferries is included in the surface transportation reauthorization bill. Advancing an updated surface transportation bill is proving to be a challenge in Washington, which is being dominated by many other serious issues. *(Editor's note: See a continuation of this discussion in the next answer.)*

And we will continue to work with M.E.B.A. to address the very real threat of international piracy. As American mariners simply attempt to do their jobs, their lives are in constant peril as these pirates decide when – not if – to take further aggressive action against U.S.-flag ships. Transportation labor believes that the

Secretary of Defense must provide embarked military personnel to board United States-flagged vessels carrying U.S. government cargo in regions at high risk of piracy. This has become a top priority for Rep. Elijah Cummings, Chairman of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee.

M.O.: The country is consumed with the discussion on healthcare and other national issues such as energy and immigration. While these issues dominate, how can the maritime industry work with TTD to gain attention for their issues in a chaotic legislative atmosphere?

E.W.: At present, the Senate has proposed delaying the surface transportation bill for 18 months. In my testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee this summer, I took the opportunity to remind members of Congress and the Administration that while there are many urgent priorities for America today, a safe and efficient transportation system is one of those priorities. We hear about the health care reform debate every day. Achieving energy independence is a critical issue, and of course the deep recession weighs heavily on the minds of American workers. These are issues workers care about deeply, understand and face every day. But sound transportation policy and appropriate investment are also critical issues. If we don't make a significant commitment to transportation today, we will cause irreparable harm to our economy now and for years to come. We're never going to live in a Washington that doesn't have a full plate, and Congress needs to invest in ports, rails and roads immediately.

To its credit, the business community is in agreement with labor on this point. And we all recognize that the benefit of investing in our transportation needs is two-fold: we will rebuild America's decaying infrastructure while at the same time create millions of family-supporting jobs. In fact, the surface transportation bill that the House of Representatives approved would create six million jobs in six years. The multi-year transportation bills that Congress writes truly create more jobs than almost any other legislation.