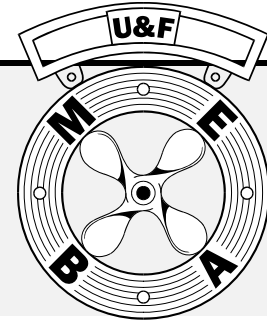


LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

OCTOBER 2008



1. Time is running out for those who are not yet registered to vote and wish to help choose the next U.S. President along with state and regional lawmakers. Most states close down voter registration at various dates in October. If you are not yet registered to vote, you should do so immediately. There are many websites that facilitate the process including www.rockthevote.com.

Members and retirees should be also aware of a pair of websites that makes it easy to obtain absentee ballots for the November elections. Two such sites that are excellent resources for absentee voters including www.beabsentee.org and www.longdistancevoter.org. The websites provide forms, list deadline dates and have easy-to-follow directions for getting an absentee ballot.

Please register and vote in this election – and encourage all M.E.B.A. members and retirees to participate in the general election on Tuesday, November 4, 2008.

2. Amidst the \$700 billion bailout debacle, partisan in-fighting and an all but dismal outlook on any legislation from this Congress moving forward, the Bush administration's "lame duck" approach to departing the White House has had an effect on the Maritime Security Program (MSP). While Congress did pass the Continuing Resolution (CR) that will allow the Federal Government and all its programs to operate at the funding levels approved for Fiscal Year 2008, there were no concessions made to accommodate the \$19 million increase in MSP funding slated for FY2009. The increase had been approved on both the House and Senate sides for full funding and was expected to kick in the additional \$19M to companies enrolled in the program that would have resulted in increased wages and additional jobs. There is some speculation that the Maritime Administration will somehow offset the increases by funding at the approved FY2009, until the CR ends in March, but as of yet there is no certainty.