

Support the Jones Act!

Dear Colleague,

I write to urge this body to continue its history of bipartisan support for the Jones Act. Recently, I have been surprised to see a handful of critics blasting this law, as if its history and purpose were a mystery.

Enacted after World War I to ensure that America did not lose its civilian fleet, the Jones Act (formally Section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920) reserves the carriage of America's waterborne domestic commerce to privately owned United States-flag commercial vessels built and repaired in U.S. shipyards and owned and crewed by U.S. citizens. The Jones Act and related statutes prevent America's domestic economy from being dominated and controlled by foreign shipping interests, which operate in international commerce outside the scope of U.S. laws and regulations, including tax obligations.

I would expect patriotic Americans of all political stripes to welcome the Jones Act with open arms. In the past, we have. In fact, in 1997, a resolution recognizing the critical importance of the Jones Act (H. Con Res. 65) garnered 244 bipartisan co-sponsors. But instead of supporting this vital law, certain of our colleagues have instead criticized it, making baseless accusations that the Jones Act has somehow interfered with the cleanup of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Nothing could be further from the truth. **The fact is there is no evidence the Jones Act has interfered with the cleanup in any way.** Administration officials have clearly stated they would be willing to waive the Jones act if needed and that the law has not prevented the response team from accepting aid offers from foreign nations. (Please see the *Los Angeles Times* article below for more information.) I find it ironic that some newly minted Jones Act critics blast illegal immigrants on the one hand, and then advocate opening up our waterways to foreign nationals working on foreign ships on the other.

The Jones Act is something we should all be supporting. Maintaining a privately owned merchant fleet and maritime industry is vital to our economic and military security. The domestic maritime industry provides a significant source of employment and helps maintain a cadre of well trained, loyal American citizen merchant mariners ready and able to respond, as always, to our Nation's call in

time of war or other emergency. Finally, the Jones Act ensures that ships that operate in domestic waters comply with U.S. laws and regulations, including tax obligations, workforce protections, and environmental conservation regulations.

I invite you to join with me to promote U.S. industry and U.S. job creation by voicing your strong support for the Jones Act. Should you have any questions, please contact Celeste Drake in my office (x56676).

Regards,

/s/

Linda T Sánchez

latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-jones-actqa-20100625,0,6255909.story