

RESOLUTION 18

SUPPORT THE JONES ACT

Submitted by the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO
Referred to the Resolutions Committee

Cabotage laws have been around since the beginning of the United States. In fact, a couple bills passed by the first Congress dealt with cabotage, which is moving cargo or people from one domestic port to another.

The Merchant Marine Act of 1920 solidified cabotage within the U.S maritime industry. Section 27 of that measure spelled out that cargo moved from one U.S. port to another U.S. port must be carried aboard a U.S.-built, U.S. citizen-crewed, U.S.-owned and U.S.-flagged vessel. Today, Section 27 is simply known as the Jones Act.

The Jones Act is the maritime equivalent of the Davis-Bacon Act. In 2019, a PriceWaterhouseCoopers study revealed the law helps maintain 650,000 American jobs found in every state and territory, contributing billions of dollars each year to the economy. In addition, the Jones Act provides for a pool of well-trained, reliable U.S. citizen mariners available to sail aboard U.S.-flag military support vessels in times of crisis.

Recently, American crews working on Jones Act ships immediately and consistently delivered badly needed supplies and materials to our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico

after hurricanes and earthquakes. During the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent supply chain crisis, U.S.-flag vessels sailing domestic routes met their timetables, while foreign-flag operators reduced their schedules.

Through the years, presidents of the United States, members of Congress and officers in the military have supported the Jones Act. In addition, the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions have stood with their maritime sisters and brothers when the law has come under attack.

The United States is not alone in its use of cabotage laws, which also deal with air and land transportation. More than 90 other countries have some forms of cabotage on their books. However, the Jones Act is considered the global good standard.

The AFL-CIO enthusiastically commits to continue its critical fight for the good-paying, valuable-benefit jobs created within the scope of the Jones Act. This law supports America's mariners and shipyard workers along with other shoreside personnel. It has proven its value to the economy and national security for more than a century.