

**Statement for the Record Submitted by:**

**The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO); the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union (USW); the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM Union); the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW); and the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers (IBB)**

**House Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces;  
Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime  
Transportation  
Joint Hearing  
“Revitalizing Shipbuilding and the Maritime Industrial Base”  
April 22, 2026**

Chairmen Kelly and Ezell, and Ranking Members Courtney and Carbajal, we thank you for holding this important hearing today.

We write to reaffirm our strong support for the bipartisan, bicameral Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security for America Act – the SHIPS for America Act (S.1541/H.R.3151) - and to urge Congress to bring this critical legislation to the floor for a vote without further delay. We are grateful to Rep. Kelly and Rep. Garamendi, along with Senators Young and Kelly, for their leadership in introducing this critical legislation and for their sustained commitment to the cause of revitalizing the American maritime industrial base. We also want to express our thanks to the significant number of cosponsors, from both sides of the aisle.

Our allied unions represent tens of thousands of workers in shipyards, naval facilities, ports, and throughout the supply chains that build, equip, and crew America’s vessels. We know this industry from the inside, and we know what it has lost. Our unions filed the Section 301 trade petition in March 2024 to force a reckoning with China’s state-directed campaign to dominate global shipbuilding and maritime logistics. We are proud that petition helped drive the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) investigation and the announced port fees on Chinese vessels and port equipment. We welcomed the Administration’s Executive Order on Restoring America’s Maritime Dominance and the release of the Maritime Action Plan (MAP) in February 2026 as important steps toward the whole-of-government approach this challenge demands. When the port fees are reimplemented, proposals that limit the diversion of cargo from U.S. ports of entry should be considered, such as the Land Port Maintenance Tax outlined in the MAP.

The momentum generated by these executive actions must be translated into the durable policy framework that American shipbuilding workers need. The Section 301 port fees that were the centerpiece of USTR's response to China's predatory practices have been paused until November 2026. As that pause goes on, China's shipbuilding dominance continues to grow, while American yards and workers remain ready to compete. We have welcomed Executive action, but it is vital that a durable statutory framework be created which only Congress can provide.

The SHIPS for America Act provides that framework. It would create the Maritime Security Trust Fund, incentivize commercial vessel construction in domestic shipyards, invest in repair yards, workforce development and mariner training, and bring the kind of long-term demand stability that the U.S. shipbuilding industry has not had in decades. More than ninety percent of U.S. military cargo moves on commercial vessels – restoring our shipbuilding capacity is as much a national security imperative as it is an economic one. The SHIPS Act has earned genuine bipartisan support in both chambers, and it directly complements the Administration's own Maritime Action Plan.

We urge Congress to advance the SHIPS for America Act swiftly. Our members and the nation have waited long enough. We stand ready to work with Congress and the Administration to see this legislation enacted into law.