

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 12, 2016

The Honorable Paul N. Jaenichen, Sr.
Administrator
U.S. Maritime Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Rear Admiral James A. Helis
Superintendent
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
300 Steamboat Road
Kings Point, NY 11024

Dear Administrator Jaenichen and Superintendent Helis:

We write to express our strong support for the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy's Sea Year program and our deep interest in the resolution of the "Stand Down" that was announced on June 15, 2016.

Our primary concern is the safety and well-being of the midshipmen. Occurrences of sexual assault and harassment during the Sea Year or on campus threaten the safety and security of young midshipmen who are committed to serving our country, and MARAD must take action to prevent these incidents. We support efforts by the Maritime Administration (MARAD) and Academy administrators to ensure safe at-sea environments which are conducive to learning. As members of Congress from across the country, we stand ready and willing to work with MARAD, the Academy, private industry, and other stakeholders to further these efforts.

Sea Year is a core component of the Academy curriculum that provides midshipmen with hands-on experiences aboard commercial vessels. This unique training and leadership development opportunity distinguishes the Academy from other Service Academies and State Maritime Academies. We support the restoration of the program as soon as practicable and believe that a solution that effectively addresses safety concerns and provides midshipmen the opportunity to obtain the sea days necessary for licensure and graduation is achievable.

The Sea Year is central to what makes the United States Merchant Marine Academy such a vital asset to the nation. Thank you for your support for the U.S. maritime industry.

Sincerely,



PETER T. KING
Member of Congress



STEVE ISRAEL
Member of Congress



DEB FISCHER
United States Senator



BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator


GARY C. PETERS
United States Senator


ROGER WICKER
United States Senator


JACKIE WALORSKI
Member of Congress


DENNIS ROSS
Member of Congress


PETE SESSIONS
Member of Congress


JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress


JOSEPH P. KENNEDY, III
Member of Congress


SCOTT GARRETT
Member of Congress