WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE:
1517 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-3826
FAX: (202) 225-3143

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PATCHOGUE OFFICE:
31 OAK STREET, SUITE 20
PATCHOGUE, NY 11772
PHONE: (631) 289-1097
FAX: (631) 289-1268

ZELDIN.HOUSE.GOV

FACEBOOK.COM/REPLEEZELDIN
TWITTER.COM/REPLEEZELDIN

Congressman Lee M. Zeldin

First Congressional District of New York

August 26, 2016

Secretary Anthony Foxx
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx,

I am writing in regards to the Sea Year stand down on commercial vessels in place at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, and to urge you to reinstate Sea Year in order to allow the midshipmen to reach their full academic potential.

I strongly agree that the serious allegations of sexual assault, bullying, and harassment occurring under Academy supervision during Sea Year must be immediately investigated. Both the main campus and Sea Year vessels must be safe environments where the next generation of Merchant Marines receives a world class education. However, I have serious concerns that the order for a complete stand down of the entire Sea Year program on commercial vessels is not an effective way to deal with the allegations and issues raised at the USMMA.

As a member of the House of Representative's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, I believe that this stand down will negatively impact current midshipmen, as well as prospective students. The education gained by midshipmen during Sea Year on a commercial vessel helps them learn critical skills that go beyond the education gained on a federal vessel.

I urge you to lift the Sea Year stand down and to allow the midshipmen to return to sea. I believe that the USMMA can both develop proper protections for the students and allow them to receive the essential training provided by Sea Year. Ensuring that the next generation of Merchant Marines is prepared to serve our nation is critical for our national security and economy. If you would like to discuss this in depth, please feel free to contact my District Director, Mark Woolley, at (631) 289-1097.

Sincerely,

Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER