



International Organization of
Masters, Mates & Pilots

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May 21, 2020

The Honorable James E. Risch
Committee Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Menendez
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: American Mariners stuck overseas due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Dear Mr. Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

During this unprecedented time we are living in, we are all being shocked into realizing what is important in our lives. Common questions such as “What/Who is essential?” are being asked and answered around the country. You can witness this from the slew of people lining up to applaud our Health care workers after their shift ends or the new found respect everybody has for the employees stocking up our grocery stores and keeping this literal life line open and ready for business.

Behind the scenes of this life line is a supply chain that is responsible for getting 90% of everything to these stores and lifesaving medical supplies in the hands of our Health Care workers. I am of course speaking of the United States Merchant Mariners who man these Commercial Cargo ships to deliver the goods in peace and in war. These Professional Mariners are true Front-Line workers and now is the time to lend a hand to get them home.

As I write this there are five US flagged container vessels that have had crew on board since December 2019. Three of the ships represented by our organization are the Maersk Durban, Safmarine Ngami, and APL Gulf Express. These ships run a 24/7 operation delivering goods that help supply US bases overseas as well as commercial and humanitarian cargo around the world. We need someone who can cut through the red tape and allow the U.S. Consulates in the ports these ships’ call to facilitate a crew change for the mariners who are in need of relief.

We would like to open up a dialogue with your committee to make this happen. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and the entire Committee, we thank you for taking the time to read this. We appreciate your work on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Respectfully,

Captain Thomas Larkin
Atlantic Ports Vice President
Former Captain of the APL Gulf Express
International Organization of Masters, Mate, and Pilots