

Dear Navy League Members,

In the wake of the devastation in Puerto Rico by Hurricane Maria, we've been hearing a lot about the Jones Act in the media. A lot of that information — including that the act prevented foreign ships from bringing much-needed relief supplies to the U.S. territory — was incorrect. The Jones Act is now under attack in Congress, and we need you to tell your lawmakers why this law is so important to our maritime industry and the U.S. economy.

Under consideration by Congress are four different bills to undermine the Jones Act permanently ([S.1894](#), [S.1561](#), [HR 3966](#), [HR 3852](#)). One would end Puerto Rico service forever, another would automatically waive the Jones Act after natural disasters, regardless of U.S. ship capacity, a third would end the Jones Act restrictions on coastwise trade, and a fourth would get rid of the Jones Act completely. This is the most aggressive attack on the Jones Act in recent memory, and we must oppose these efforts by showing our support for American mariners and American shipyard workers.

WHAT IS THE JONES ACT

The law requires that waterborne cargo moving between any two ports in the United States and its territories be transported on American vessels, using American mariners, on American-built ships.

WHAT THE JONES ACT DOES

- Create jobs. The law secures hundreds of thousands of American jobs (including veterans' jobs) on ships and in ports.
- Improve our national security and aids in response to national crises. Leaders of the Department of Defense, the Navy and the Coast Guard all strongly support the Jones Act and have spoken forcefully in support of it. Our armed forces rely on a strong American commercial maritime industry to create a pool of mariners and U.S.-flag ships for military sealift during times of war and national emergency.
- Strengthen our shipbuilding industry. Jones Act ships also ensure industrial base shipbuilding knowledge is preserved, no matter the political situation facing the U.S. Navy.
- Secure our borders. Leading homeland security experts have spoken to the important role the Jones Act and the domestic maritime industry play in protecting our borders, ports, and infrastructure. Foreign-flag ships transiting through our inland waterways creates opportunities for trafficking and increases the burden on our Coast Guard.

WHAT THE JONES ACT DOESN'T DO

- Prevent foreign ships from delivering aid. Foreign ships can always sail directly to an American port.
- Increase the cost of goods. A GAO study found that the Jones Act was not to blame for prices in Puerto Rico, and in fact ensures reliable, steady delivery of goods.
- Slow the delivery of donated goods. U.S.-flag ships have the knowledge and capacity to deliver goods to Puerto Rico quickly. Containers full of goods delivered to the island by U.S.-flag ships were sitting in port terminals for several days, waiting for distribution.

Approximately 11,300 containers of goods have been moved via U.S.-flag ships to help our fellow Americans to recover, and 9,000 more are on their way. In fact, the American maritime industry stowed approximately 3,000 containers in the terminals in advance of the hurricane's arrival. Waiving the Jones Act does nothing to speed the delivery of goods, but only undermines the American workforce.

Please take action on our campaign [here](#).

Here's a [short video that you can share to help explain the Jones Act](#). For myths and the real facts, see [this article](#). If you want to know more, please email [Sara Fuentes](#).