

NAVY LEAGUE LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
ISSUE BRIEF: FUTURE SAILORS
April 18, 2024



ASK: Appropriate a total of \$6.7 million for the Sea Cadets and \$4 million for the Young Marines
ASK: Double the State Merchant Marine Academy Student Incentive Program payments

Sea Cadets and Young Marines

As our sea services face difficulties recruiting the next generation of Sailors, Marines, and Mariners, we ask that you support proven programs that develop future leaders of character and help young Americans to pursue the sea services as a career. Both the Sea Cadets and the Young Marines provide vital pipelines for young Americans, particularly those in difficult circumstances, to learn about the sea services and to embark on a career in the sea services. Both programs rely on grants made possible through Congress to include \$6 million for the Sea Cadets (above the \$1.7m in the budget) and \$4 million for the Young Marines. The Sea Cadets receive their funding under Navy Operations and Maintenance, Recruiting and Advertising, of which over 90% is directly attributed to training program expenses. The grant that the Young Marines receives has been placed in the annual Defense Appropriations Bill under Title VI, Other Defense Programs, Drug Interdiction and Counter-Drug Activities Defense (DICD), Drug Demand Reduction. According to the NSCC website, 12% of the 2019 class at the U.S. Naval Academy were once Sea Cadets.

New Mariners

We also ask that you support doubling the State Merchant Marine Academy Student Incentive Program payments to students from \$8,000 to \$16,000 per year to compensate for growth in tuition and training costs since 2008. In exchange, students agree to receive Navy Reserve commissions as officers in the Strategic Sealift Officer Program, the same requirement that graduates from the US Merchant Marine Academy incur at a much higher cost to the Government and helps make the academies affordable to a greater range of students. It is imperative that we not allow costs to inhibit the recruitment of the next generation of mariners. For FY25, the SMAs request \$4.8 million for SIP.

The Navy League of the United States strongly supports the Sea Cadets program, as well as the Young Marines and the State Merchant Marine Academy Student Incentive Program. We ask Congress to fully fund each program at the levels listed above.