



FIVE REASONS CONSERVATIVES SUPPORT THE JONES ACT



The domestic maritime industry is a uniquely American industry that serves our national interest. As a result, many conservatives support **THE JONES ACT**, the fundamental law of the American maritime industry, for at least five reasons:

1 | **THE AMERICAN MARITIME INDUSTRY IS UNIQUELY CRITICAL TO NATIONAL SECURITY AND HIGHLY COST EFFECTIVE FOR OUR MILITARY.**

The Department of Defense (DOD) and the U.S. Navy rely on the American commercial maritime industry for military sealift support. Therefore, a strong commercial maritime industry – shipyards, mariners, and vessel operators – plays a unique and powerful role in national security. The DOD has estimated that it would cost tens of billions of dollars annually to use military personnel and assets to replicate the sealift provided by the commercial American maritime industry.

That is why military leaders have consistently endorsed the Jones Act for its contribution to defense needs. General Darren McDew, Commander of U.S. Transportation Command, asserted that laws like the Jones Act help “delay the day when U.S. national security interests could no longer be supported by a U.S. mariner base springing from our commercial sealift industry.” According to Admiral Paul Zukunft, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, changes to the Jones Act “would put our entire fleet in jeopardy,” and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Paul J. Selva, has said, “I can stand before any group as a military leader and say without the contribution that the Jones Act brings to the support of our industry there is a direct threat to national defense, and I will not be bashful about saying it and I will not be silent.”

THE FIVE REASONS

- 1 | The American maritime industry is uniquely critical to national security and highly cost effective for our military.
- 2 | The Jones Act helps keep our borders secure and our homeland safe.
- 3 | Adam Smith strongly and specifically endorsed coastwise laws like the Jones Act.
- 4 | President Ronald Reagan supported it.
- 5 | The Government Accountability Office (GAO) says changing the rules in the middle of the game would impact every segment of the U.S. maritime industry and undermine billions of dollars of recent investments in modern, state-of-the-art American vessels.

2 | THE JONES ACT HELPS KEEP OUR BORDERS SECURE AND OUR HOMELAND SAFE.

America is a maritime nation. An America without the Jones Act, where ships and seamen from foreign nations could move freely within our country's waterways, would create a porous border and increase the threat to homeland security. Ensuring that vessels operating in domestic commerce are owned, controlled, and crewed by Americans in compliance with U.S. laws adds a layer of homeland security that would be impossible to replicate in any other way. As one think tank recently said, the "venerable Jones Act provides an important barrier to terrorist infiltration of the homeland."

During the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the U.S. domestic maritime industry responded en masse, sailing into the danger zone – despite the possibility of additional attacks – to save Americans stranded in lower Manhattan. Immortalized in the short film *Boatlift*, the American shipping industry responded to the attacks with "the largest sea evacuation in history ... where nearly 500,000 civilians were rescued from Manhattan by boat [in] 9 hours" on U.S. vessels.

3 | ADAM SMITH STRONGLY AND SPECIFICALLY ENDORSED COASTWISE LAWS LIKE THE JONES ACT.

In *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith not only endorsed Britain's own version of the Jones Act but also described it as "perhaps, the wisest of all the commercial regulations of England" for national security reasons. He specifically highlighted coastwise shipping laws as the rare exception to his general belief in free trade.

ABOUT AMERICAN MARITIME PARTNERSHIP

American Maritime Partnership (AMP) is the voice of the U.S. domestic maritime industry, a pillar of our nation's economic, national, and homeland security. More than 40,000 American vessels built in American shipyards, crewed by American mariners, and owned by American companies, operate in our waters 24/7, and this commerce sustains nearly 650,000 American jobs, \$41 billion in labor compensation, and more than \$150 billion in annual economic output.



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4 | PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN SUPPORTED IT.

All modern presidents have supported the Jones Act. President Ronald Reagan offered his own unequivocal endorsement for the Jones Act, assuring that his Administration would "not support legislation that would jeopardize this long-standing policy" as "embodied in the Jones Act."

5 | THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (GAO) SAYS CHANGING THE RULES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GAME WOULD IMPACT EVERY SEGMENT OF THE U.S. MARITIME INDUSTRY AND UNDERMINE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF RECENT INVESTMENTS IN MODERN, STATE-OF-THE-ART AMERICAN VESSELS.

Changes to the Jones Act would undermine hundreds of millions of dollars of recent investments in modern, state-of-the-art American vessels that have been made in reliance on the Jones Act. Altering the fundamental regulatory structure of the domestic maritime industry – literally changing the rules in the middle of the game after massive investments have been made – would also undermine future investment in every segment of the Jones Act industry (e.g., crewing, shipbuilding, financing). Even the GAO discussed the potential ripple effects of a change to the Jones Act. The impacts would be felt from the Great Lakes to the U.S. inland waters to the Gulf of Mexico to the coastal waterways.