



At the **Gala Dinner**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

CONGRESSMAN **ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS**

7TH DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

In his role as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation during the 111th Congress, Congressman Cummings oversaw the implementation of the U.S. Coast Guard's budget. He also worked to increase diversity within the Service and the Coast Guard Academy and strengthen the acquisition management process to ensure that our taxpayer dollars are used effectively and efficiently.

Ms. Helen Delich Bentley requested the honor of introducing her close friend and colleague, Congressman Elijah Cummings, at the Gala Dinner. Witty remarks aside, she praised his ability to learn the industry and get things done, especially with the TWIC card and the local maritime high school.

Cummings told us that when Nancy Pelosi appointed him Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, he didn't want the job, because he gets seasick and can't swim. He confessed later that sometimes the things we think aren't important turn out to be the most important things in our lives.

Diversity is not a problem to Cummings, but rather a promise. He genuinely believes in focusing on common ground, not differences. An African-American Democrat, he joined together with a Republican "white lady" to make a difference in the maritime community. He stated no one has helped him more than Ms. Helen Bentley to understand the maritime community, and wholeheartedly thanks her for all she's done to mentor him in this position.

The two guiding principals in everything Cummings does are that we don't fall into the culture of mediocrity, and that we do everything in our power to make the earth better than we found it. He repeated this and tied it into his speech the entire evening. He related

side stories, every-day life situations and a few jokes to tie it all together and emphasize his points.

Cummings' mantra of the evening is to rise above mediocrity; work together to strengthen ourselves. Falling into a culture of mediocrity can only lead us to a situation where our country goes backwards. He feels we can always do better and it is not good enough to simply maintain. We're all better than that. He sets a high bar for excellence to prepare future generations, our country, our children - to take on those responsibilities that are very important to our position in this country.

When Cummings heard of the Maritime Industries Academy High, he discovered that it wasn't teaching anything maritime. Together with Ms. Bentley, they decided this wasn't right, and something needed to be done. Most kids attending the school didn't realize there was a major port only six miles away. Cummings drew the connection that if kids aren't exposed to new ideas, they can't dream about them. They contacted Glen Paine, Eric Nielsen and others in the maritime education community, set up a foundation, and now teach the aspects of the maritime industry and expose them to the many maritime careers available. Cummings commented that when he goes to the school, all he hears about from students and teachers is the "cool old lady" that comes.

They don't get excited about a congressman; Ms. Bentley is the superstar. And according to Ms. Bentley, Congressman Cummings is there more than she is!

It upsets Cummings that the USCG is asked to do more with less. He was pleased with the passage of the \$10.2 Billion USCG Authorization act. To give an example, he used the *DEEPWATER HORIZON* incident. The government had to pour resources in from everywhere to deal with it. He realized one root of the problem was in the acquisitions department. People often do not stay in positions long enough to develop the expertise required to do the job well. If you can't put a contract together that's in the interest of all parties and it works against each other, then that's a real problem. The contracts the USCG Acquisitions Department put together with private contractors favored the industry and did not meet the USCG needs; vessels were equipped with only 180° radar instead of 360°, radios were not waterproof, secure communications systems were susceptible to eavesdropping, boats weren't floating, etc... (sounds funny, but was unfortunately true). So with Congressman Cummings help, they put contracts together that will allow the USCG to obtain the proper equipment to get their jobs done effectively. At the same time, they found a way to turn the acquisitions department into a respected, attractive career.





Cummings commented on our theme of the burden of regulations. He urged us not to wipe them all off the board, but rather call for fairness and balance. He agreed there are many old, outdated regulations that need to go, but however, it is many of the regulations that today make our industry safer. A few years ago, he sent out a survey to industry and asked which regulations got in the way of their business. Most often the replies were with the EPA and OSHA. He commented that if we did away with OSHA, we'd send many people to work healthy and they'd come home in a coffin.

Cummings has spent a phenomenal amount of time trying to help put regulations forth. Maritime safety committees complained the process wasn't moving fast enough. The Authorization Act will help the USCG accomplish this goal. Recent legislation was put forth that includes provisions to save lives and preserve the USCG. Cummings believes it is a step forward, but was saddened that while many provisions were passed in the House, the Senate dropped them. One in particular is student loans for maritime workers, which would allow workers to be properly trained for and advance within the profession. The loan helps them fill the gap from where they are now to where they need to go in their careers.

Cummings commented on rebuilding trust and confidence in the USCG and system. He's trying to put in place systems for the USCG to be dependable – they actually will do what they say they will do. Many people do not want to appear before appeals boards because they feel before they set foot in the room, the odds are stacked against them. He strives to put in place systems to establish a trust with the USCG that is dependable, and the USCG Authorization Act gives them the resources they need to pull it off.

Cummings understands the industry; has a common-sense approach to find the real problem and fix it. He stressed it's not about what's right at the moment, but what is best for our nation and the next generation; not the next election.

Although Cummings is no longer the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, he will remain deeply engaged in maritime issues and feels he must "guard the change." Cummings is also saddened that many of the congressmen who understood the maritime industry were not re-elected for the 112th Congress. Budget cuts threaten the industry; he is deeply troubled by the data showing a dwindling U.S. Flag Fleet since 1981. Maritime policy must be formulated to revitalize the merchant marine. It's critical to fight to continue the cargo preference program at a full level. Cummings drew applause from CANN members with his statement in favor to support the Jones Act. He commented that most congressmen do not

Captain Cal Hunziker present Congressman Cummings with a plaque which reads: "The Council of American Master Mariners Presents This Award to The Hon. Elijah E. Cummings In Recognition of the Many Years of Support he has given our Organization and the U.S. Merchant Marine" Captain Hunziker also presented Congressman Cummings with an Honorary membership into CANN.

understand how the Jones Act is related to jobs.

He urged us to educate our new members so they can understand exactly what we do, and how important it is. If we, as masters and maritime professionals, don't make ourselves a priority, no one else will.

Cummings believes Democrats and Republicans must not only move to common ground, but higher ground. He's learned if people work together and truly have the interest of Americans at heart, making the world a better place, anything can be done. ☆



CANN SUPPORTS MARITIME INDUSTRIES ACADEMY HIGH WITH DONATION



Captain Joe Hartnett presents Mr. Glen Paine, Chairman, Maritime Industries Academy Foundation, with a check for \$1000.

The school motto "Our Honor is Our Anchor" holds students to a higher expectation regarding academic achievement, attendance, punctuality, and exemplary student behavior. The academy expects their graduates to have the knowledge, thinking skills and appropriate attitudes necessary for success in a global society. ☆

The Baltimore / Washington D.C. CANN Chapter is pleased to present a donation to Maritime Industries Academy High in Baltimore.

The Maritime Industries Academy High is a Baltimore City Public Schools maritime-themed high school with a military component that encourages its 600 students to take a leadership position in all aspects of their lives.

The school motto "Our Honor is Our



Mr. Glen Paine

Maritime Industries Academy High

Our Honor is our Anchor

