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COMMITTEE ON
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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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June 8, 2026

David Heindel
President
Seafarers International Union
5201 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Dear Mr. Heindel:

The Committee on Education and Workforce (Committee) is conducting oversight regarding serious allegations of apparent misuse and misappropriation of funds associated with two political action committees (PACs) affiliated with the Seafarers International Union (SIU): the Seafarers Political Activity Donation PAC and the Political and Legislative Organization on Watch. Recent reporting, including an article citing documents filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC), has raised significant concerns regarding financial accountability, internal controls, and possible breaches of fiduciary duty involving these PACs.¹ Workers' political contributions should never function as a personal checking account for union insiders. The apparent absence of meaningful safeguards raises the troubling question of whether anyone was watching the money at all.

Specifically, the article references documents filed with the FEC indicating embezzlement problems in the Seafarers Political Activity Donation PAC. This PAC reportedly received approximately \$293,000 in insurance recoveries for "embezzlements by [the] former Treasurer."² The Political and Legislative Organization On Watch also filed disclosures with the FEC reporting reimbursements associated with "misappropriated funds."³ Based on the reporting, the Committee understands that this former treasurer of both PACs was your daughter, Chelsea Diab, also known as Chelsea Heindel. In her position as treasurer, she reportedly exercised substantial control over the financial operations of both PACs during the period in question.⁴

¹ Taylor Giorno, *Union President's Daughter Accused of Embezzling from Political Committees*, NOTUS, May 5, 2026, <https://www.notus.org/money/seafarers-international-union-pac-alleged-embezzlement>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

The Committee is particularly troubled that the suspected misconduct may have persisted for years before being detected. The PACs' disclosures raise substantial questions regarding the adequacy of SIU's financial oversight mechanisms, including whether sufficient auditing, segregation of duties, expenditure approvals, and independent review procedures were in place.

SIU represents approximately 80,000 maritime workers⁵ whose dues and political contributions are collected with the expectation that those funds will be managed responsibly, lawfully, and transparently. If union-connected political funds were diverted for personal use as alleged, this is a serious breach of member trust and raises significant concerns about governance and financial controls within the organization.

To assist the Committee in understanding the circumstances surrounding these allegations and evaluating the adequacy of SIU's financial controls, please provide responses to the following requests no later than June 22, 2026:

1. Describe in detail the nature and scope of the alleged embezzlement or misappropriation involving SIU-affiliated PACs.
2. Identify all individuals who are known or suspected to have participated in, facilitated, or failed to prevent the alleged misconduct.
3. State the total amount of funds believed to have been misappropriated and specify whether any additional losses remain under investigation.
4. Describe when SIU leadership first became aware of the alleged misconduct and what actions were taken in response.
5. Explain the internal financial controls, compliance procedures, and auditing mechanisms that were in place at the time of the alleged misconduct.
6. Describe any corrective actions SIU has implemented or plans to implement to prevent future misuse of union or PAC funds.
7. State whether SIU has notified affected contributors, members, donors, or federal authorities regarding the alleged misconduct.
8. Identify any outside consultants, vendors, treasurers, or financial managers involved in administering SIU political committees during the relevant time period.

When union leadership fails to implement basic financial safeguards, it is rank-and-file workers who ultimately bear the cost. As such, the Committee expects labor organizations entrusted with the stewardship of members' dues to maintain rigorous safeguards and uphold the highest

⁵ Kenneth Quinnell, *Get to Know AFL-CIO's Affiliates: Seafarers*, AFL-CIO BLOG, Oct. 14, 2025, <https://aflcio.org/2025/10/14/get-know-afl-cios-affiliates-seafarers>.

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standards of accountability. All union members deserve confidence that their contributions are protected from fraud, abuse, and mismanagement—not enriching insiders.

Your prompt attention to these requests is appreciated. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Committee staff at 202-225-4527.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Walberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "T" and "W".

Tim Walberg
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick W. Allen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "R" and "A".

Rick W. Allen
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health, Employment,
Labor and Pensions