Senators Introduce Bill to Exempt Shipbuilding Workforce from Cuts



USS Greeneville (SSN 772) departs Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, in April 2024. Greeneville had been at the shipyard for a scheduled maintenance period since June 2021. *Photo credit: U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Charlotte Oliver*

WASHINGTON – A bipartisan group of New England lawmakers has introduced a bill in Congress to protect the shipbuilding workforce.

U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), a senior member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee and co-chair of the U.S.

Senate Navy Caucus, Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.), Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Angus King (I-Maine) introduced the Protecting Public Naval Shipyards (PNSY) Act to exempt the workforces of America's four public shipyards, like the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, from recent hiring freezes and mass layoffs.

The bill aims to ensure the maintenance and overhaul of America's nuclear-powered submarine fleet continues uninterrupted by requiring the U.S. Department of Defense to exempt certain positions at public shipyards from workforce reductions.

"Our shipyard workforce represents an essential component of our national defense and preparedness – they should have never been subjected to this administration's ill-considered hiring freezes," Shaheen said. "The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard workforce is supposed to be exempt from the hiring freeze, but there continues to be issues with implementation. Our bipartisan bill enshrines that exemption in federal law and ensures that no public shipyard is subjected to such chaos and uncertainty in the future, allowing them to focus instead on the vital role they play in our national security."

"Our nation's public shipyards depend on a highly skilled and experienced workforce," Collins said. "At Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, workers set the gold standard for repairing, retrofitting, and refueling our nation's nuclear submarines. This bipartisan bill would protect the men and women at PNSY, and at all four of our nation's public shipyards, helping sustain the critical contributions these shipyards make to our national defense, the readiness of our Navy, and the economies of their surrounding regions."

Protecting PNSY Act would require DoD to exempt positions at the public shipyards from workforce reductions that are critical to maintenance of our submarine fleet and that support the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP). The bipartisan bill also removes hiring limits for

these positions.

Click **HERE** to read the bill text.