



Written by [D. Michael DeRidder](#) on October 1, 2024

East Coast, Gulf Coast Port Worker Strike Begins

Members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) walked off their jobs just after midnight earlier today in the union's first strike since 1977. The ILA members are calling for increased wages and a ban on the use of [automated cranes and container trucks for unloading freight](#). ILA President Harold J. Daggett spoke about leveraging U.S. dependence on foreign imports for their strike, stating in an interview last month:

Let me explain something to you, these people today don't know what a strike is. When my men hit the streets from Maine to Texas, every single port will lock down. You know what's going to happen? I'll tell ya, first week it'll be all over the news every night, boom boom, second week, guys who sell cars can't sell cars cause the cars ain't coming in off the ships, they get laid off. Third week malls start closing down, they can't get the goods from China, they can't sell clothes, they cant do this, everything in the United States comes on a ship, they go out of business. Construction workers get laid off because the materials aren't coming in, the steel's not coming in, the lumber's not coming in, they lose their job. Everybody's hating the longshoremen now because now they realize how important our jobs are. Now I have the president screaming at me "I'm putting a Taft-Hartley on you!" Go ahead, Taft-Hartley means I have to go back to work for 90 days as a cooling off period.... Who's going to win here in the long run? You're better off sitting down, and let's get a contract, and let's move on with this world, in today's world I'll cripple ya. I



AP Images

Longshoremen on strike at a shipping terminal in Texas



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will cripple you, and you have no idea
what that means, nobody does.

In a statement [released by the ILA yesterday](#), the union claimed the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) and the foreign-owned shipping companies they represent have earned billion-dollar profits while offering ILA workers impacted by inflation an “unfair” wage package:

The Ocean Carriers represented by USMX want to enjoy rich billion-dollar profits that they are making in 2024, while they offer ILA Longshore Workers an unacceptable wage package that we reject.... ILA longshore workers deserve to be compensated for the important work they do keeping American commerce moving and growing. It's disgraceful that most of these foreign-owned shipping companies are engaged in a “Make and Take” operation: They want to make their billion-dollar profits at United States ports, and off the backs of American ILA longshore workers, and take those earnings out of this country and into the pockets of foreign conglomerates. Meanwhile, ILA dedicated longshore workers continue to be crippled by inflation due to USMX's unfair wage packages.

The ILA statement also claimed the foreign-owned shipping companies have price-gouged U.S. consumers through quintupling the price of a shipped container in only a matter of weeks:

In addition, the shippers are gouging their customers that result in increased costs to American consumers. They are now charging \$30,000 for a full container, a whopping increase from \$6,000 per container just a few weeks ago. In just a short time, they went from 6K, to 18K, then 24K and now \$30,000. It's unheard of and they are doubling their \$30,000 fee stuffing the same container from multiple shippers. They are killing the customers.

Representative Mike Collins (R-Ga.) pointed out that the longshoremen are already highly paid employees, and accused the unions of extortion for demanding higher pay and threatening shortages:

Reminder, the dockworkers who went on strike last night make nearly 4x the salary of the average American, not including their benefits.

It is extortion for a union to intentionally raise prices and cause shortages of things that people who make a quarter of their salary need.

— Rep. Mike Collins (@RepMikeCollins) [October 1, 2024](#)



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