

June 25, 2010

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Conyers,

My name is David Erickson. My son Christopher Blair Erickson was electrocuted onboard the S/R Wilmington on January 7, 2009. S/R Wilmington is a tanker owned and operated by SeaRiver Maritime Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Exxon-Mobil. Christopher's death was a totally preventable incident for which SeaRiver Maritime has not acknowledged responsibility for and has yet to hold anyone accountable. SeaRiver Maritime and several of SeaRiver Maritime employees are clearly guilty of misconduct, negligence and incompetence. Major failures in procedures, training and material issues have been identified in the U.S. Coast Guard investigation. At least five personnel or material errors were made, anyone of which could have prevented Christopher's electrocution. The U.S. Coast Guard has issued SeaRiver Maritime a major non-conformity of their Safety Management System.

I am writing to you to discuss the Jones Act and the Death on the High Seas Act (DOHSA.) The laws as presently written are terribly unfair by not allowing compensation for loss of companionship, loss of consortium or wrongful death. I was totally shocked when I learned that a company benefits by an employee dying in an accident as opposed to surviving. These holes in the Jones Act and DOHSA need to be corrected. In Christopher's case, the Jones Act and DOSHA is very striking in that is death was due to negligence and several minutes passed after he was shocked before CPR was started. Especially shocking to me is the deployable treatment I have seen of spouses, children, parents and siblings by companies hiding behind DOHSA.

Since Christopher's death, I have undertaken various actions and initiatives toward preventing other families from going through what myself and my family has gone through. I have pressed the U.S. Coast Guard to conduct a timely and thorough investigation. I want to ensure as many steps as possible be taken to increase electrical safety, prevent people being shocked and electrocuted, not only onboard the ships of SeaRiver Maritime but all ships and offshore platforms. Many things have to be done including changes in regulations, proper implementation and compliance for Safety Management Systems and training in the Maritime Industry. Proper changes to the Jones Act and Death on the High Sea Act are extremely important to hold companies accountable and changing their attitude toward safety and accident prevention.

If you, any other Representatives, Senators, staffers or associates would like to discuss Christopher's death, the Jones Act or DOSHA, please feel free to contact me at anytime via e-mail or my cell phone.

I am willing to come to Washington D.C. to meet with members of Congress and testify to Congress.

Regards,



David P. Erickson

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