

Dear Senator Wicker,

My name is (b)(6)

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(b)(6) my children are associated with the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. (b)(6)

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I am reaching out for two reasons: 1. To say thank you for your support of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and 2. To alert you to the urgent issues significantly affecting the well-being and health of the Midshipmen.

As you are aware, MARAD has neglected the Academy's infrastructure for decades. This past winter, many Midshipmen were without heat for months in the barracks due to boiler system failures. Other times there was no hot water in the showers. Last summer my (b)(6) after having sailed for eight months, arrived to his barracks room to find mold covering the walls and ceiling. I then purchased a large dehumidifier for his room in hopes of controlling the mold growth. Other parents have bought heaters for their student's rooms because of the lack of heat during the cold Long Island winter.

When you walk around campus, you may note: paint peeling, ceilings leaking or falling down, basements flooded, doors falling off of hinges, broken furniture and appliances, and unusable bathroom facilities. One refrigerator has needed replacing for several years. Legionella bacteria was recently found in the domestic water, and there is presence of asbestos in building structures.

The gross negligence of a United States federal service Academy must no longer be allowed.

Sir, I respectfully request that you and your fellow Congressmen and women along with Secretary Duffy provide the USMMA with the laser-focused attention that it needs for its future sustainability and success.

Don't these amazing young men and women who have dedicated to serve their country deserve the very best training environment?

Thank you for your time, Senator Wicker, and I hope to see you on campus soon.

Kindest regards

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