



June 10, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Mikulski:

The National Military Family Association has long been an advocate for improving the quality of life of service members and their families, who have sacrificed greatly in support of our Nation. One of our highest priorities is protecting military families' earned benefits, including the savings achieved by shopping at the commissary. For this reason, we support amending the *Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2016* to restore \$322 million in funding to the commissary. We ask for the Appropriations Committee's support of this important legislation.

Military families consistently tell us how much they value the commissary benefit and the savings they receive by shopping there. In fact, the commissary benefit and the savings it provides are essential elements of military compensation. Reducing commissary funding to the level called for in the Defense Appropriation would force stores to increase prices, cut back store hours and lay off employees, effectively eroding the value of the commissary benefit. Price increases would present special hardship to low income military families and those in remote or overseas locations, who have few shopping options.

Beyond facing increased costs for groceries, military families would be hurt in other ways by the proposed cut in commissary funding. Approximately 60 percent of commissary employees are military-connected: spouses, children, or retirees. If commissaries are forced to lay off employees or close stores, what will happen to those jobs?

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation to protect this essential benefit for military families. If we can be of assistance in your efforts to support military families or if you have any questions or need further information, please contact Eileen Huck in our Government Relations Department at (703) 931-6632 or EHuck@militaryfamily.org.

The National Military Family Association is the leading nonprofit dedicated to serving the families who stand behind the uniform. Since 1969, NMFA has worked to strengthen and protect millions of families through its advocacy and programs. They provide spouse scholarships, camps for military kids, and retreats for families reconnecting after deployment and for the families of the wounded, ill, or injured. NMFA serves the families of the currently serving, retired, wounded or fallen members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Commissioned Corps of the USPHS and NOAA.

Sincerely,



Joyce Wessel Raezer
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
The Honorable Lamar Alexander
The Honorable Susan Collins
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
The Honorable Lindsey Graham
The Honorable Mark Kirk
The Honorable Roy Blunt
The Honorable Jerry Moran
The Honorable John Hoeven
The Honorable John Boozman
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
The Honorable Bill Cassidy
The Honorable James Lankford
The Honorable Steve Daines
The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
The Honorable Jack Reed
The Honorable Jon Tester
The Honorable Tom Udall
The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
The Honorable Jeff Merkley
The Honorable Chris Coons
The Honorable Brian Schatz
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
The Honorable Christopher Murphy