



**Legislative Alert #113-28: URGE the President to Continue to Protect the
Commissary Benefit for our Military Community**
DEFENSE

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Issue Background: In recent news, the Department of Defense (DOD) has stated that it is considering closing Commissaries on military bases due to spending caps under the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011, i.e. “sequestration.” The Administration had previously said that military Commissaries would be safe from potential cuts stating that, “this is not how a great nation should be treating its military and military families... We can do better than that.” However, Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Chuck Hagel is now contemplating shutting down the majority of Commissaries on military bases within the Continental United States (CONUS) because of sequestration.

Commissaries provide groceries, supplies, and other necessities to military households at a low cost compared to many civilian supermarket chains. These on base facilities generate on average **\$4,300** in savings for military families each year. In addition to providing the children of service members with low cost, nutritious food that would be more expensive elsewhere. Active Duty servicemembers, reservists, Veterans, and immediate family members shop at commissaries making them a center of daily life on military bases. Military Commissaries also employ thousands of individuals; many employees are Veterans themselves or the direct family members of those currently serving in the armed forces. Jobs created by the presence of an on base Commissary have been put in danger because of the prospects of further cuts to DOD’s budget under Sequestration.

Action Required: Contact the President and urge him to oppose any proposals to cut the Commissary benefit for military families, especially as DOD considers its Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) Budget request. Without action, thousands of servicemembers, Veterans and their families will be adversely affected by their closure.

Details (To Be Put Into Letter):

We strongly urge the President to protect the Commissary benefit for members of our Armed Forces, Veterans and their families, especially during consideration of the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) Budget request. The proposal by Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Chuck Hagel in recent weeks to look at their closure has greatly alarmed the military

community. Commissaries provide groceries, supplies, and other necessities to military households at a low cost compared with many civilian supermarket chains. These on base facilities generate on average **\$4,300** in savings for military families each year. Closing Commissaries would do irreversible harm to the well-being of our military families, especially given that many servicemembers and their families have endured 12 years of constant deployments overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Hitting our military and Veteran communities with more devastating cuts, especially during this time of economic uncertainty, would mean they would have to pay more for basic necessities their Commissary in the Continental United States (CONUS) were to be closed.

Military Commissaries also employ thousands of individuals as well, many of whom are Veterans and/or the spouses and family of servicemembers. Cutting Commissaries would endanger the jobs of those who work for the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) and negatively impact the economic situation of communities around military bases. On base Commissaries have been critical institutions in military life and closing them would be a devastating decision for the welfare of these military communities. Furthermore, Commissaries have already made their own sacrifices by cutting back in these tough economic times for the nation. In the President's own words in regards to Commissaries, "this is not how a great nation should be treating its military and military families." We can and we must protect the existence of Commissaries on bases around the nation and ensure this crucial benefit for our military families continues.

Take Action: Click the "Take Action" link at the top of the Alert to immediately email and/or write to your Senators. This is the quickest and most effective method of expressing your views to Congress. You can also write and/or e-mail the 'Details' section or edit as you desire for a more personalized communication . Also, contact friends and family and urge them to use the Contact Congress feature on AUSN's website as well. Please direct any questions concerning this issue to our Director of Legislation, Anthony Wallis, at 703-548-5800 or at Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org.

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