

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2017

**Support H.R. 2850 the Military Patron
Protection Act**

Dear Colleague:

The Department of Defense operates a network of retail outlets on military bases called commissaries and exchanges. These programs have traditionally provided a wide range of goods and services to members of the Armed Forces and their families at savings from 20 to 30 percent, greatly helping our military personnel and their families financially. These programs operate with nearly \$1 billion in user fees contributed by patrons in addition to federally appropriated funds. These patron-generated fees pay for the construction of commissary and exchange facilities, while other portions of revenue pay for necessary military family and community support programs.

Congress enacted a series of reforms in the National Defense Authorization Acts for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017 that provide wide latitude to the Secretary of Defense to pursue reforms to the business practices of these operations. In giving the DoD this flexibility, Congress also called for assurances that benefits would be augmented with funding if these enacted reforms fell short of their savings and efficiency objectives. In two recent reports (see links below), the GAO has cautioned that these reforms may indeed not accomplish their objectives.

The potential of these changes to negatively impact the commissaries and exchanges system and the military patrons who fund it is why we have introduced the Military Patron Protection Act (MPPA). The MPPA would provide patrons with a voice in how their contributions are managed by the DoD, and provide much needed transparency over the multitude of changes taking place within these programs. The MPPA would help ensure that reforms intended to provide for more efficient operations do not come at the expense of the patrons; our military, their families, retirees, and survivors.

The MPPA would reveal whether user fee generated funds are being redirected to support military family support programs that have been traditionally provided by appropriations. Further, the MPPA would identify when small, woman-owned, and veteran-owned businesses are negatively affected by the proposed reforms. Lastly, the MPPA would highlight when reforms directly or indirectly dissipate resources for a host of benevolent military causes, including Fisher House, wounded warrior programs, military child scholarships, and other needed family support programs.

Please help us in providing for this needed transparency and oversight for these vital programs, and co-sponsor H.R. 2850, the Military Patron Protection Act. For any questions and to become a co-sponsor, please contact Ray Celeste, Jr. (Rep. Walter Jones) at

Raymond.Celeste@mail.house.gov or 5-3415, or Tom Harper (Rep. Tim Walz) at Tom.Harper@mail.house.gov or 5-2472.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



Tim Walz
Member of Congress

Attachments:

[GAO Report: DOD Commissaries and Exchanges and Efforts to Achieve Budget Neutrality](#)

[GAO Report: DOD Needs to Improve Business Processes to Ensure Patron Benefits and Achieve Operational Efficiencies](#)

H.R. 2850, the Military Patron Protection Act has the support of the following:

Air Force Association (AFA)
Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)
American Logistics Association (ALA)
American Military Partner Association (AMPA)
American Military Retirees Association (AMRA)
American Military Society (AMS)
American Retirees Association (ARA)
American Veterans (AMVETS)
Armed Forces Marketing Council (AFMC)
Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA)
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)
Association of the United States Army (AUSA)
Association of the United States Navy (AUSN)
United States Coast Guard Chief Warrant and Warrant Officers Association (CWOA)
Commissioned Officers Association of the US Public Health Service, Inc. (COAUSPHS)
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)
Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. (GSW)
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (JWV)
Korean War Veterans Foundation (KWVF)
Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA)
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
Military Order of Foreign Wars (MOFW)
Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)
Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC)
National Industries for the Blind (NIB)
National Military Family Association (NMFA)

Non Commissioned Officers Association of the United States of America (NCOA)
Military Chaplains Association of the United States (MCA)
Reserve Officers Association (ROA)
Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)
Society of Military Widows (SMW)
The Flag and General Officers Network (TFGON)
The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
United States Army Warrants Officers Association (USAWOA)
United States Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association (CPOA)
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW)
Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)