



June 10, 2015

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
United States Senate  
503 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator 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 your amendment to H.R. 1735, *the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016*, which would restore \$322 million in funding to the commissary.

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. The proposal included in H.R. 1735 would force stores to increase prices, reduce 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 introducing 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](mailto: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