



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact**

Candace Wheeler

media@saveourbenefit.org

(202) 386-7319

**Military Partners and Families Coalition Joins Efforts  
To Protect Commissary and Exchange Benefits**

**Washington, D.C. (December 16, 2013)** –The Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC) has joined [The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits](#), which now represents nearly 2 million service members – active duty, National Guard and Reserve, retirees, and veterans – and their families.

Troops and their families have become increasingly concerned by ongoing attacks to their earned benefits. The news that the Department of Defense is considering a proposal to close all stateside commissaries set off a firestorm within the military community. Although no final decisions have been made, the official word from the Pentagon is that “all cost-cutting efforts need to be on the table.”

“We realize these are tough economic times, and that sequestration and shrinking budgets are forcing the Pentagon to make some drastic decisions, but closing commissaries would be a terrible betrayal and a broken promise to our military community,” said Candace Wheeler, Spokesperson for The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits. “Commissaries are a vital part of military pay and compensation and one of military families’ most valued earned benefits,” added Wheeler.

“The commissary is a benefit that contributes to quality of life every single day of the year: healthy food at prices much more reasonable than outside the gate,” said Dr. Samuel Toba, Co-Founder MPFC. “This hits the pocketbook of every military family and must be retained for family financial and lifestyle resiliency,” added Toba. “The commissary and exchange benefit also extends beyond tangible financial savings and employment opportunities for military families. Commissaries and exchanges serve as unifying bonds, serving as social gathering places and promoting a sense of community amongst military families,” stated Toba.

Commissaries and exchanges are part of the solution to our Nation’s budget challenges, not part of the problem – providing a great return to the Department of Defense on every dollar that is spent to provide this benefit. Commissaries and exchanges also support several key White House initiatives – hiring veterans and military spouses, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

President Obama believes commissaries are an important benefit of military life and said it best at Camp Pendleton this past August when commissaries were closed due to furloughs, he said:

“...the commissary your families rely on closed a day a week. We can do better than that. That’s not how a great nation should be treating its military and military families.”

“The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits couldn’t agree more,” said Wheeler. “We will continue to fight for our military families’ earned benefits and welcome the support of Military Partners and Families Coalition, which represents some of our newest commissary and exchange beneficiaries,” stated Wheeler.

Service members, veterans, and their families; concerned citizens; and organizations should join [\*The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits\*](#) and [Take Action Now](#) to help protect these critical earned benefits. Coalition [Valued Associate](#) members are comprised of some of the largest, oldest, and most trusted military and veterans’ service organizations in the country, as well as those representing our newest veterans and family members.

[Military Partners and Families Coalition](#) (MPFC), founded in 2011, is the only organization founded by partners of active duty service members. MPFC mission is to provide support, education, resource, and advocacy for partner/spouses and children of LGBT service members – including families of service members on active duty, in the reserves, National Guard, and veterans.