



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact

Candace Wheeler

media@saveourbenefit.org

(202) 386-7319

Voice for America's Sailors Joins Coalition to Protect Benefits

Washington, D.C. (April 1, 2013) – The premiere advocate organization for the Navy has added its voice to help promote and protect commissary and exchange benefits for our troops, veterans, and their families. [The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits](#) announced today that the Association of the United States Navy (AUSN) has been “piped aboard” the Coalition as a Valued Associate member.

AUSN joins the growing number of *Save Our Benefit Valued Associates* concerned by ongoing threats to commissary and exchange benefits. In the past year alone, military resale was the target of five major attempts to undermine this “quality of life” benefit which saves military patrons \$4.5 billion annually and contributes billions of dollars to the military communities they serve. In addition, due to budget cuts and sequestration triggering, commissaries are now operating under a hiring freeze and may face possible furloughs and Monday closures. Since commissaries and exchanges are the largest employers of military families in the world and the leading employer of veterans in the nation, this further impacts the military community.

“On behalf of the Association of the United States Navy, we are proud to join the *Coalition to Save our Military Shopping Benefits*,” says Anthony Wallis, Director of Legislation for AUSN. “Commissaries and exchanges provide financial stability for our Sailors and their families. A deployed Sailor knows that while overseas the family that he or she has left behind has a facility that is accessible, affordable and dependable,” says AUSN Deputy Executive Director, CMDCM Jerry Featherstone, U.S. Navy (ret). “We look forward to working with the Coalition to ensure that during these fiscally constrained times our service members and families maintain the reliability they’ve come to count on with military commissaries and exchanges,” Wallis concluded.

“We are honored to welcome AUSN to the Coalition and we encourage all Sailors and their families to join our efforts,” said Patrick Nixon, President of *The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits*. “With budget cutters in and outside of Congress continuing to overlook the fact that military resale is part of the solution to curbing defense spending not part of the problem, it will take all of us to protect this vital benefit,” added Nixon.

Millions of veterans, service members, and their families rely on commissaries and exchanges to stretch their household budgets. An average military family of four can save \$7,000 a year. In remote and overseas locations, it is often the only affordable shopping opportunity available. In metropolitan areas,

where prices are consistently higher, commissaries and exchanges help keep prices affordable. For some junior enlisted military families and fixed income retirees, savings are the difference between making ends meet and filing for public assistance.

AUSN advocates for the needs of the Active Duty Navy, Navy Reserve, and Veterans. Formerly known as the Naval Reserve Association, which traces its roots back to 1954, AUSN was established in 2009 to expand its focus on the entire Navy. AUSN works for not only their members, but the Navy and Veteran community overall by promoting the Department of the Navy's interests, encouraging professional development of officers, and enlisted and educating the public and political bodies regarding the Nation's welfare and security.

Service members and their families, veterans, concerned citizens, and organizations who wish to join [*The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits*](#) or to learn more, please visit www.SaveOurBenefit.org.