



Commissaries get unexpected \$90 million boost from Congress

Military.com

Officials with the Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefit said the change demonstrates congressional support for the commissary. "We appreciate the strong support of Congress," said Candace Wheeler, a spokesman for the coalition. "Our military families rely on the critical savings commissaries provide – especially with increasing uncertainty and stress, rising groceries prices, and particularly at a time when surveys are showing that more military families are accessing food banks."

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They Cut the 2015 Commissary Budget?! Here's What it Means

SpouseBuzz.com

The 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, which is expected to become law before Christmas, included some surprises for those of us who follow this stuff closely. Despite lawmakers saying that they rejected a plan by the Defense Department to cut commissary funding, lo and behold they made cuts anyway.

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What's in the NDAA for military families? Was anyone listening?

National Military Family Association

It's easy to say that Congress ignored what military families have been saying when they finalized the compromise National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 on December 2nd. Didn't we say "Don't balance the budget on the backs (and pocketbooks) of military service members and their families"? Yet the bill, which passed the House of Representatives on December 4, 2014 contains:

- a **lower** pay raise than called for by law (1% vs. 1.8%)
- a **cut** to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) of 1% for military families who move to a new location next year
- an **increase** of \$3 to pharmacy co-pays
- a **cut** to the commissary funding by \$100 million

This compromise bill contains significant threats to the financial stability of military families. But the hard choices Congress needed to make to finalize this bill pale in comparison to the continued threat of sequestration.

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Not enough votes in the Senate to end sequester, Sen. Tim Kaine says

The Hill

Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., says the Senate is trying to reduce the sequester "as much as possible," but elimination of the spending limits is not possible. "We tried it in the spring, and we couldn't get the votes," he said. Now that Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) is expected to take the Senate Armed Services Committee gavel in the new Congress, Kaine suggested there might be a better chance of making sequester relief a priority.

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Is the U.S. military facing a crisis of morale?

Military Times

As the Iraq and Afghanistan war era ends, many active-duty troops are expressing lower job satisfaction and less interest in re-enlistment, according to a Military Times survey. Many troops feel underpaid and unappreciated, just 44 percent of 2,300 active-duty respondents rated their pay and benefits as "good" or "excellent" — a new low. More than 10 percent say they struggle to pay monthly bills, and at least once during the past year resorted to a high-interest payday loan service to make ends meet. Troops say morale has sharply declined over the last five years, and most of those in uniform today believe their quality of life will only get worse.

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