



Coalition and Valued Associates Advocacy and Actions...

Coalition Valued Associate member organizations testified before the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee this week on Beneficiary and Advocacy Overview of the FY 15 President's Budget. Col (Ret) Michael Hayden, Government Relations Director for the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) testified on behalf of The Military Coalition – comprised of 33 organizations representing more than 5.5 million members of the uniformed services-- active, reserve, retired, survivors, veterans--and their families. Rick Jones, Legislative Director for the National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS) testified on behalf of the National Military Veterans Alliance (NMVA) – which represents more than 3.5 million members and some 80 million Americans – those who serve or have served their country and their families. Both the ALA and the AFMC are NMVA members.

In his opening statement, Mike Hayden stated, “Between the FY14 and 15 pay caps, this purposed BAH change, the planned reductions in the commissary, and the new health care fees, an E5’s family of four would experience nearly a 5,000 dollar loss in purchasing power annually. For an O3, that family of four would experience nearly a loss of 6,000 dollars annually. These budget proposals would be major steps backwards towards repeating the insidious measures which lead to retention and readiness problems in the past and would undo the needed compensation improvements Congress put into place since 2000.”

In his opening statement, Rick Jones stated, “You know that commissaries are a core benefit of the military family, an integral part of total compensation. Military families see 30% savings by shopping at commissaries. They save up to 4,400 dollars a year. The Pentagon plan would crush that savings hitting families right in the pocket book. The strangulation plan the Pentagon has foisted out would mean higher prices at the commissaries making commissary shopping less attractive. Resulting in fewer customer visits, diminished sales. It would also cause a deep drop in sales at exchanges, exchanges which pay for Morale Welfare and Recreation programs, such as child care, sports programs for the family.”

TMC and NMVA written testimony strongly supports commissary and exchange benefits, and opposes any reductions that would end the appropriation for the commissary and exchange system or mandates consolidation. Written statements for the record were also submitted by:

- Association of the United States Army (AUSA)
- Air Force Association (AFA)
- Retired Officers Association (ROA)
- National Military Family Association
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
- U.S. Naval Sea Cadets

To watch the hearing, go to <http://armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/2014/4/beneficiary-and-advocacy-overview-of-the-fy15-president-s-budget>.