



Coalition and Valued Associates Advocacy and Actions...

In reaction to the Pentagon's new budget-cutting catchphrase: "*Slow the Growth*," the Coalition and Valued Associate members have been refining their own message. The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) created a brochure, "[*Slow the Growth* – *That Train Has Left the Station*](#)," which they shared with every Member of Congress during their annual "Storm the Hill" events. MOAA states, "Uniformed and civilian leaders have created a perfect storm, providing political top cover to slash pay and benefits with repeated, alarming – and noticeably misleading – statements on personnel cost growth."

MOAA also states within their brochure and in their Congressional testimony that, "This 'quadruple whammy' of capping pay, increasing out-of-pocket expenses for housing, consolidating TRICARE, and slashing commissary benefits would be four giant steps towards repeating past insidious measures that led to retention and readiness problems." ALA and the Coalition are driving home the fact that DoD's proposal to drastically cut the commissary benefit by nearly 70 percent will eliminate the benefit not "Slow the Growth."

Military Service Associations, to include Coalition Valued Associates, will testify on May 6th before the Senate Armed Services Committee. The Association of the United States Army (AUSA), the Air Force Association, the Association of the United States Navy (AUSN), and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) will make up the second panel. Making a rare appearance before the committee will be the full roster of the Joint Chiefs. This will likely be the last hearing before the committee marks up the annual defense authorization bill.

Lawmakers have expressed deep concern about the Pentagon's proposed reductions and potential cuts. Many lawmakers, military and veterans organizations, Coalition Valued Associates, and the ALA have contended that no changes should be made to military pay and compensation before the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) releases their report in February 2015.

Furthermore, Coalition Valued Associates, to include AUSN, continue to warn that "slashing the Defense Commissary Agency's funding by more than two-thirds means that the commissaries will have to eliminate their discounts and raise prices in order to survive, an increase of goods at commissaries by as much as 20 percent. Inevitably, increased costs will lead to fewer customers, which will inevitably drive commissaries out of business."

"Insisting that no commissaries will be closed, the President's Budget states that it is only reducing the amount of subsidies which DeCA receives. Yet, there is no subsidy to reduce, as the reduced prices on groceries and household goods available through the commissaries constitute an earned benefit to military families," states AUSN in their [2014 Fact Sheet on Military Commissaries](#).