



Coalition and Valued Associates Advocacy and Actions...

Nearly 200 military spouses attending the recent Military.com Spouse Summit overwhelmingly placed military retirement as their top benefit concern. The majority of the working groups also identified Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) as their second most important benefit, with the remaining groups split between commissaries, military on-base housing, retirement pay, and the GI Bill. Only three benefits were included on all 14 working groups lists – commissary funding, retirement pay, and BAH. Save Our Benefit, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), National Military Family Association, and Blue Star Families participated in the discussion which focused on “The Affect Sequestration May Have on Your Military Life.” The discussion was also observed by staff members from the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

Save Our Benefit also participated in a Military Spouse appreciation event hosted by Unilever’s Military Team and its Dove Brand, in partnership with the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), Kingsmill, and Xanterra. The event was designed to inspire 200 women of the military, both active duty and spouses.

In addition to hearing testimony <http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/14-05-06-military-compensation> from the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), Air Force Association (AFA), Association of the United States Navy (AUSN), and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) on military compensation, the Senate Armed Services Committee received written testimony for the record from the National Military Family Association and combined testimony from the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) and the Reserve Enlisted Association (REA).

The National Military Family Association testimony stressed the need to:

- Let the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) do its job in evaluating compensation, including health care, Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), and commissaries, holistically.
- As you evaluate the proposals submitted by DoD, consider the cumulative impact on military families’ purchasing power and financial well-being, as well as their effects on the morale and readiness of the all volunteer force now and in the future.
- Reject budget proposals that threaten military family financial well-being as a way to save money for the government.

- Protect the 30 percent savings military families receive when shopping at the commissary by continuing the annual appropriation to support the system at its current level. Commissaries are part of compensation and provide important savings for military families. Before any decisions are made to change the commissary benefit, a study should be conducted to determine the value of the benefit.

To read their entire statement for the record:

<http://www.militaryfamily.org/assets/pdf/Testimony/NMFA-Statement-SASC-5-6-1414- final.pdf>

ROA and REA testimony stated, “By cutting the compensation and benefits of the men and women who serve, the risk exists that the military will lose its best and the brightest leaders, who will seek better opportunities in the private and, perhaps even, the public sector. Manning challenges already exist in midgrade officer and enlisted ranks, which will grow only worse.” “Expecting serving and retired military members and their families to carry an increased financial burden is indirectly taxing just them to pay for this Nation’s defense. It is equally unfair to tax the next generation of warriors who are just joining the uniformed services today.”

Specific to the commissary benefit, ROA and REA testimony stated, “While it is acknowledged that the Reserve Force uses the commissary less frequently than those within the Active duty culture, Reserve and Guard members are not indifferent. Access to the commissary is symbolic, as it was a parity issue only recently corrected. Many within the Reserve and Guard committee object to the removal of subsidies to the commissary because of the effect on junior serving members and families.”

To read their entire statement for the record:

http://www.roa.org/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/Statement_SASC%20Budget_05.6.14.pdf