



## **MOAA responds to Defense Bill**

Military Officers Association of America

Defense bill negotiators reached a bipartisan agreement last evening on the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act. Some proposals harmful to military families were averted, but MOAA believes the final bill will degrade the morale and readiness of the nation's all-volunteer force. "We are disappointed in the final defense bill and its adverse effect on military families," stated retired Navy Vice Adm. Norb Ryan, president of MOAA. He cautioned, "We must reverse this trend of eroding pay and benefits because we're sending the wrong signal to the troops at the wrong time."

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## **The NDAA moves forward: What did Congress decide?**

National Military Family Association

Unfortunately, service members and their families are going to get more of what we got last year – pay raises below the Employment Cost Index, reductions in Basic Allowance for Housing, and TRICARE pharmacy co-pay increases. Under the bill, DoD would be required to send Congress a report detailing how the commissary could be made cost-neutral – in other words, operate without the \$1.4 billion subsidy it currently receives. The report is due March 1, 2016 and must consider options such as consolidating commissary and exchange operations, privatizing the commissary, and changing the way commissary prices are set. Our Association is extremely concerned about the cumulative impact these provisions will have on military family finances. We oppose balancing the budget on the backs of military families!

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## **Congressional conferees shape leaner budget for military pay, benefits**

Military Update

Military members and families have little to cheer from compromises House and Senate conferees have reached as they finalized details of key personnel provisions in the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill. Conferees rejected DoD's call to begin to cut \$1.3 billion in taxpayer support of commissaries. Instead, they will arm the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) with new authorities to test ways to operate stores more efficiently including varied product pricing schemes. The impossible-sounding goal of a new study will be to preserve the value of the shopping benefit yet make commissary and exchange operations "budget neutral," or able to operate without taxpayer support, by 2019.

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## **DoD official: Let's talk about 'touchy' commissary issue**

Military Times

"We're not going to reduce the benefit," said Brad Carson, acting under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, at a leadership luncheon of the National Military Family Association. But Carson went on to say there are ways to improve the commissary benefit while reducing the system's taxpayer subsidy. Military family advocates contend that changing the way groceries are sold in commissaries, with some items sold at higher prices in order to pay for some or all operating costs, would degrade the traditional, longstanding commissary benefit.

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