



Top enlisted personnel: Protect family programs

Military Times

Service families are well cared for in today's military but face increasing stress amid discussions on altering benefits like health care and family programs, the services' top enlisted members told Congress on Wednesday. With the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission proposing sweeping reforms to military pay and benefits packages and the White House's proposed 2016 budget pitching cost-savings measures like health care fee hikes and commissary cutbacks, the men implored Congress to protect family benefits.

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Would administration and commission proposals ruin the military retail system?

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)

Stars and Stripes also carried a column by journalist *Tom Philpott* that reported on a claim that AFSA has been contending all along: If the DoD portion of President Obama's FY 2016 Budget Plan is passed as is, the military commissary benefit as we know it would be destroyed. The article reports, in part, "The Defense Department's fiscal 2016 budget request would slash taxpayer support of base grocery stores by \$322 million in 2016 and by \$1 billion next year, enough to 'destroy' the shopping benefit, warns the American Logistics Association (ALA)." As to the exchange system, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service says the proposals of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) to consolidate the exchange system will not realize the projected overhead savings, and the contribution to Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs would be slashed or eliminated.

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Restoring the faith with our military

HuffPost

The "Pentagon benefit battles" of the last five years have created such a raw wound for our military families that military advocacy groups are having to remind them "You Are Not The Problem"; commentary more reflective of the post-Vietnam era. Thankfully, I don't think that attitude extends into most of America; ironically it seems to be an attitude held inside the beltway on parts of Capitol Hill, at DoD, think tanks, and much of the media, states Jeremy Hilton, #KeepYourPromise co-founder.

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Army mulls cutting troops in Alaska, officials say

Stars and Stripes

The Army could remove the bulk of its forces in Alaska under cost-saving plans that will cut active-duty ranks by tens of thousands of troops, the military said. Army officials are in Alaska this week discussing the looming force cuts — mandated under the Budget Control Act of 2011, commonly known as sequestration. The act required that the Army reduce its troop strength from a high of 570,000 in 2010 to 450,000 by the end of fiscal year 2017. If sequestration-level funding continues in fiscal year 2016, the Army will have to reduce its active duty force to 420,000.

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Fort Meade: Healthy Base Initiative to launch new projects

Capital Gazette

As one of 14 Department of Defense pilot installations and sites selected for this initiative, Fort Meade received approximately \$206,500 in funding to create health-based programs. "We're making a good first step and we have the support of Senator (Barbara A.) Mikulski and people in our corner who are really supporting this initiative," said Scott Myers, business operations officer for DFMWR. "So, hopefully going forward, we will be able to do things to [make] the community healthier."

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