



Plan to privatize commissaries killed; 'couples BAH' cut survives

Stars and Stripes

The Senate voted Wednesday to kill a plan hatched by its armed services committee to privatize five large commissary stores to test the concept of commercial grocers running base stores to save defense dollars. But as the Senate version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill moved toward a final floor vote late Thursday, amendments to block other initiatives to curb compensation were denied consideration. Only a modest number of amendments among hundreds drafted got up-or-down votes.

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Congress divided on future of commissary

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

The House and Senate have approved their versions of the defense bill, and they don't see eye to eye on the commissary. Senate lawmakers cut \$322 million from the commissary budget. A cut this big will lead to increased prices, reduced operating hours and days of operation, and a reduction in store staff... As Vice Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Barbara Mikulski rejected the commissary cut and provided full funding... House lawmakers rejected the cuts to commissary funding and the House defense appropriations bill included full funding for the commissary in the budget. MOAA thanks Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) and Mikulski (D-Md.) for leading the charge to prevent privatization of commissaries.

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"Odd Couple" champions commissary

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)

One would not immediately associate staunch Republican Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) with proud Democratic Senator Barb Mikulski (D-MD) on many issues. However, given the importance of commissaries as part of non-pay compensation, the two came together for what AFSA believes is a very common sense amendment to the Senate Armed Service Committee (SASC) version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) ... Related specifically to the commissary issue is AFSA's membership in The Coalition to Save Our Military Shopping Benefits. Along with some of our VSO friends, many business partners outside the Veterans community that AFSA would not otherwise partner with also belong to this group. We invite you to check them out: [Save Our Benefits](#).

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Senate passes NDAA despite spending controversy

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)

The Senate approved (71-25) its version of the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA-S. 1376) despite a Presidential veto threat and a partisan disagreement over spending. The House and Senate versions bypass sequestration spending limits (automatic budget cuts) on the Defense budget by shifting an extra \$38 billion into the emergency war fund, which is not included as part the general DoD budget...Only a small number of floor amendments were considered. The Senate approved an FRA-supported amendment to halt the privatization of five stateside commissaries, but deferred other amendments that would advance FRA's legislative agenda.

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Losing faith because of budget impasses

Association of the United States Army (AUSA)

Lasting scars to our nation's national security are forming because of the continued political stalemate over spending priorities, including our financial commitment to defense. While some view the tug-of-war over the budget as a game of political brinksmanship, there are consequences from leaving the military adrift and undirected, not the least of which is a sense of unease bordering on irrelevance among the good, honest people who have dedicated themselves to military service. Good people are deciding to leave our military because they have lost confidence in the government's commitment to their future... a generation of warriors who now hear a constant drumbeat of complaints that taking care of soldiers and their families has become too expensive.

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AAFES offers good jobs for military dependents

NAUS Weekly Update

Day to day living is challenging for transient military spouses with children, who suffer an unemployment rate of 30 percent. Nearly 17 percent of approximately 35,000 Exchange associates identify themselves as military spouses. The Army and Air Force Exchange Service spouse continuity and preference programs allow spouses and domestic partners to build a career alongside their service members with each relocation. Complete details on how to apply for a career with the Exchange, along with a listing of current available opportunities, are available at the Exchange Employment website.

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