



# AMERICAN MILITARY RETIREES ASSOCIATION

YOUR "HOME BASE" IN RETIREMENT

June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015

The Honorable James Inhofe  
205 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
503 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Inhofe and Senator Mikulski,

The American Military Retirees Association thanks you for introducing an amendment to H.R. 1735 which proposes an alternative to Section 652, relating to a plan to privatize the defense commissary system. As you know, the Senate Armed Services Committee's version of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act supports the privatization of the commissary system.

Like you, the American Military Retirees Association believes that privatization provides the potential for negative impacts on military service members, family members, and retirees and that the risks of such a change are too great to implement without further analysis and study. We believe that your amendment will provide the necessary time and resources to fully assess the impact of such a sweeping change and that the findings of such an assessment will provide the opportunity for a fully informed decision to be made at a later date.

The American Military Retirees Association believes commissary and exchanges are a vital part of military pay and compensation. Ninety percent of the military community uses these benefits and consistently rank them as a top compensation benefit, yielding returns that far outweigh taxpayer support. They also provide critical jobs for military families and veterans—over 60 percent of employees are military affiliated—and provide healthy living alternatives both stateside and overseas.

It is our belief that privatizing the commissary system will have negative impacts on all who currently benefit from the use of commissaries and exchanges. We are concerned that prices will rise, jobs for family members will be reduced, and that the overall quality of service will be diminished. We are encouraged by the fact that your amendment will fully assess these concerns.

We support and thank you for your leadership on this very important issue. We continue to urge the Senate not to allow radical and irreversible changes to these critical benefits without studying the facts, assessing a broad range of direct and indirect consequences, and keeping the promise made to our service members and their families.

Sincerely,

National Legislative Director

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