

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

JAMES P. HOFFA
General President

25 Louisiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001



KEN HALL
General Secretary-Treasurer

202.624.6800
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June 4, 2015

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, I write to urge you to maintain the full commissary benefit for military families as the Senate considers the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016. I specifically urge you to support the amendment being offered by Senators Inhofe and Mikulski, which replaces section 652 of the bill, and calls for a careful study into privatization before agreeing to recklessly wade into any such privatization plan.

The commissary system is a vital benefit to our nation's active military, their families, and veterans across the country. The system provides thousands of jobs for American Teamsters in the warehouse, shipping, and food distribution industries. Commissaries also provide a needed benefit for military spouses and family members, who make up nearly 30 percent of Department of Commissary employees.

In addition to the irresponsible path to privatization that this NDAA would begin, it would also slash \$322 million from the annual commissary budget, and all but mandate a price increase for the everyday groceries our service members are purchasing for their families. This plan would defy the very idea of the commissary benefit, and may lead to such a reduction in the value of the benefit that it creates an irreversible death spiral for the commissary system as a whole. The policy changes in this bill would also directly ignore the recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission which was charged by Congress with studying the best options for reforming this important military benefit.

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We strongly encourage you to vote for the Inhofe-Mikulski amendment applying to section 652 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, and to continue fighting against any price increases or reduction in commissary funding as the bill moves forwards. If you have any questions or concerns, you should contact Sam Loesche, Legislative Representative at 202-624-6805 or sloesche@teamster.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Hoffa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

James P. Hoffa
General President