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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3303

November 25, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
U. S. Department of Defense,
Washington, D. C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel:

I write you today because I have recently heard through several constituents that the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) has been directed to come up with a plan to close all stateside commissaries. Could you please let me know if what I have been told is true? As you know, the commissary benefit is very important to our active/reserve/retired community.

I am not sure what could be accomplished by ordering this plan to be drawn up (if true) as our military community greatly appreciates and needs this benefit. In fact, the rumor is hurting our military community's morale. I think, if true, the DoD leadership is sending the wrong message to our outstanding military members and retirees as it is easier to focus on cutting benefits than in cutting waste, fraud and abuse.

As you know, there is a great deal of cost savings to be found in our military acquisition system where it appears billions of dollars a year are wasted. Cost overruns are the norm. Unfortunately, this problem appears to continue unabated.

Additionally, the waste, fraud and abuse of the billions of dollars that has been and continues to be sent to Afghanistan would be a good place to find cost savings. As you know, this problem continues regardless of the valiant efforts of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) office's to root out the waste, fraud and abuse found there.

I realize it is easier to cut benefits than to find the waste I described above. But I think there is more money to be found in those areas rather than the commissary system. Thank you very much for your continued leadership in these very challenging times.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress