



Just the FACTS...

...about Military Commissaries

Military bases, both in the United States and abroad, often house a military commissary (grocery store) available for use by both active duty personnel and local retirees. These commissaries charge their customers just 5% above cost for food. This benefit is a holdover from a time when military bases were often in remote locations with little local retail infrastructure.

1 Fact: The Defense Commissary Agency runs a chain of more than 250 grocery stores at locations around the globe.

2 Fact: Even if BRAC closes a base, the commissary can be kept open.

3 Fact: Commissary sales in 2009 totaled \$5.8 billion.

4 Fact: The U.S. taxpayer further subsidizes this military benefit by spending \$1.4 billion on commissaries every year.

5 Fact: The Defense Commissary Agency in 2009 employed more than 14,500 civil servants.

6 Fact: The five percent surcharge on groceries is used to fund new commissary construction, and the maintenance and repair of existing commissaries. But all employee costs: salaries, healthcare and pensions, are funded by the taxpayer.

Our Take: Most commissaries in the U.S. are in communities fully served by retail grocery stores. It is time to recognize that most military commissaries within the United States are an anachronism in today's society. Commissaries attached to bases that are closed under BRAC should also be closed. Closing commissaries in the U.S. will significantly reduce the \$1.4 billion in tax funds we spend on this program.

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