

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 7, 2011

Dr. Clifford L. Stanley
Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness
United States Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Room 3E764
Washington, DC 20301-1100

Dear Under Secretary Stanley:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us regarding our April 1, 2011 request to you to keep the commissary at Fort Monmouth open past the closure of the base on September 15, 2011.

In our upcoming meeting, we would like to discuss the Government Accountability Office's (GAO's) April 20, 2011 report that raised serious concerns about the Department of Defense (DoD) guidelines on commissary closures and recommended that substantial changes be made to the process. In light of this report's findings, we reiterate our call to keep the commissary at Fort Monmouth open past the closure of the base—as recommended by the Secretary of the Army—and urge you to make these needed revisions to DoD's instructions while the commissary remains operating.

As you are aware, the GAO's key finding is that “some of the general and economic criteria in the DoD instruction are not clear and are open to interpretation on when to establish or continue a commissary versus when to discontinue commissary operations.” We recognize DoD guidance for commissary operations notes that the primary consideration in assessing the need to operate commissaries on closed installations is the impact closure will have on active-duty personnel and their dependents. However, as GAO notes, the guidance does not specify how this impact should be measured and used in a decision about whether to close a commissary.

We understand that DoD has concurred with the GAO's recommendations and has stated that revisions and clarifications required to address these recommendations will be incorporated into the next version of the DoD guidance on commissary operations. However, it is concerning that any decision on the status of the Fort Monmouth commissary will be made without this revised language.

Further, we believe that the impact of any commissary closure on military retirees must also be taken into consideration in any decision process. As we have previously noted, the closure of Fort Monmouth will have a significant impact not only on the individuals employed there and the local communities surrounding the property, but on the military retirees and their families who frequently utilize the facilities at the base. The use of military commissaries is an important benefit for military retirees who served our country dutifully. Oftentimes, these

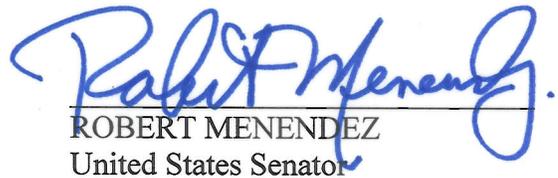
individuals are living on fixed incomes and a supermarket with products at cost is a vital resource for them.

The Defense Commissary Agency's own projections indicate annual sales at the Fort Monmouth commissary will be \$9.2 million in the year following scheduled closure. In addition, the Army has estimated that over 19,000 service members and their families may continue to utilize the commissary at Fort Monmouth after the closure of the base. This includes over 1,800 active duty service members and 3,200 military retirees. Given the projected volume of sales and the number of service members and their families impacted by any closure, we strongly support the Secretary of the Army's recommendation to you that the Fort Monmouth commissary remain open on the condition that the volume of sales supports the operational costs of the commissary.

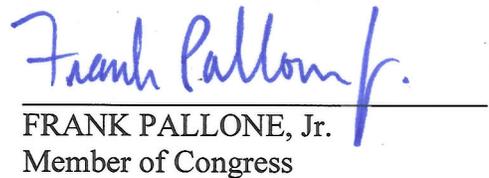
Once again, we urge you to rule in favor of the Secretary of the Army's request to keep the commissary at Fort Monmouth open past the date of closure and work to make the needed revisions to DoD's guidance on commissary operations while the commissary remains open. We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to discussing these critical issues with you in the near future.

Sincerely,


FRANK R. LAUTENBERG
United States Senator


ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator


RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress


FRANK PALLONE, Jr.
Member of Congress