

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 29, 2024

The Honorable John E. Hall  
Director and Chief Executive Officer  
Defense Commissary Agency  
1300 Eisenhower Avenue  
Fort Gregg-Adams, VA 23801

Dear Director Hall,

We write to request the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) take immediate steps to better accommodate servicemembers and their families with religious dietary requirements. Across the globe, people serving in the United States military rely on commissaries as their primary source of food. It is critical the Department of Defense ensures that active-duty personnel of all religions, including Islam and Judaism, are able to access foods that respect their faith traditions.

Commissaries are often the only safe and secure facility for military families to obtain groceries while deployed. Today, DeCA commissaries serve 8.3 million households in nearly every state in America and in a dozen other countries. In seeking to “deliver a vital benefit of the military compensation package that improves quality of life and readiness by providing grocery items at significant savings”, DeCA must better meet the needs of religious minorities within the military. There are tens of thousands of beneficiaries who practice a religion with unique dietary requirements. However, there is limited integration, supply, and promotion of certified kosher and halal options in commissaries. This neglect undermines the diversity and appreciation of the military community and discourages specific religious groups from serving. No active-duty personnel should have to sacrifice their faith to serve in our military.

We request DeCA urgently address issues regarding access to foods that meet religious dietary restrictions. Furthermore, we encourage the agency to work collaboratively with servicemembers and their families to advertise items as they are made available, incorporate items in meal solutions and special observances promotions, and ensure availability during religious holidays. Members of our Armed Forces deserve access to nutritious meals no matter how they worship and no matter where they serve.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We stand ready to partner with you to meet the needs of our military families.

Sincerely,



Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress