

Dr. Tim Westley

February 22, 2019

Greetings President Donald J. Trump,

I pray this letter finds you in good health and strength. I think that you are doing a great job and we support you greatly here in the great state of Texas! Nevertheless, I am writing in hopes that you would place the following issues on your agenda to present to congress:

- **Ensure No Military Members have a need for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP / aka Food Stamps).**
- **Help Get Active Duty Military Members Off Of Food Stamps!**
- **Ensure All Service Members are “Above The Line”!**

We have the greatest military in the world and every individual should be treated as such! No Active Duty Service Member should be concerned as to whether their family will have enough to eat, while having to be deployment ready at a moment’s notice.

Currently over 23,000 active-duty troops (families) use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), aka Food Stamps. Nearly 1 in 4 children at DOD schools are eligible for free meals, a program that's based on income (GAO, 2016).

This is not acceptable. Anyone serving our nation, putting their lives on the line and uprooting families frequently, sometimes at the drop of dime, should at the very least, be ensured that they have enough financial resources to care for them properly.

It is also about “Family Readiness”! Being assured families are cared for is an essential element to the overall mission of our service members. If the family is not okay and stable with basic needs, then this will inevitably affect Family Readiness and Mission Readiness!

Although this is not an issue for all service members, some enlisted and officers (based on family size) qualify for SNAP and those thousands who do, are too many. All of our Service Members must be “Above The Line”!

The military has The Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA) program, which was established to supplement a military member's income to a high enough level so that the member's family doesn't need to get benefits under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp program (Military.com).

Unfortunately, effective September 30, 2016, the entitlement known as Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA) terminated for members stationed in CONUS (Stateside - 48 states excluding Alaska and Hawaii), Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, or Guam (Military.com).

This is not acceptable! We must not let Congress rest until this issue is resolved!

We must require:

1. The USDA and DoD to coordinate efforts in order to access data which will help to track the number of active-duty military households who use food stamps as authorized by "The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016.
2. Petition Congress to get our all our Service Members "Above the Line" so that none will qualify for SNAP (Food Stamps), instead be able to use the FSAA!
3. FSSA must be reinstated to be available for all Active Duty Service Members, not limited to OCONUS (Outside the Continental United States), but also inclusive of those station CONUS (Stateside - 48 states excluding Alaska and Hawaii), Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, or Guam.
 - Ensure FSSA is not capped at \$1,100 per month, if more is required to ensure Service Members does not meet the threshold of being at or below 130% of the poverty line (which qualifies them for SNAP aka Food Stamps); net income, or income after deductions are applied, are still at or below the poverty line; and that Service Member with households having an elderly or disabled member, or not, have financial assets which keeps them above the line for SNAP qualification.
 - Ensure Service Members seeking to use or qualify for FSSA have a seamless process of which to do so without fear, concern, are worry. (Command approval was needed in some instances with some branches, which discouraged some who may have benefited from FSSA to seek SNAP instead, which does not require Command involvement).
 - Safeguard against any cumbersome or redundancies in recertification for FSSA once approved.
 - Ensure FSSA is properly made known to Service Members, as many did not know it exist, thus believing SNAP (Food Stamps) was the only option.

It is about "Family Readiness"! This is an essential element to the overall mission of our Service Members! If the family is not okay and stable with basic needs, then this will inevitably affect Family Readiness and Mission Readiness!

Until all Service Members are "Above The Line", we cannot rest, nor allow Congress to rest until this issue is resolved.

Respectfully,

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Attached are a few signatures from countless people around the United States, who concur with this initiative.