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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'Enough is Enough,' American Legion National Commander rips latest proposal to close stateside commissaries

INDIANAPOLIS (Nov. 27, 2013)—The head of the nation's largest veterans service organization slammed a Department of Defense proposal to shut down all military-run grocery stores in the United States as just "another plan to punish veterans" for Washington's inability to balance the budget.

"As we count our blessings on Thanksgiving, shouldn't we remember that it is our veterans and our military that have kept us safe and free?" asked American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger. "And shouldn't that gratitude extend everyday and not just on holidays? Many military retirees are on fixed incomes and rely on these commissaries. They devoted a life of service to this nation. Their health insurance premiums are going up and the Pentagon openly considers cuts to pay and benefits for those still serving in harm's way. Is it too much to ask that other areas of the federal government be cut and that the men and women who have already sacrificed so much for this country be allowed to keep the benefits that they have earned? They have already paid an enormous price to be eligible for these benefits, far more than what it is costing the treasury. Enough is enough. Veterans benefits are a cost of war and a free society."

Dellinger also pointed out that many military retirees have chosen to live in communities based on their proximity to commissaries and military exchanges. Delegates at The American Legion national convention in 2012 unanimously passed a resolution opposing any efforts "to dismantle or downsize the Defense Commissary Agency."

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