

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 6586

To authorize the Secretary of Defense to establish a pilot program to assess the efficacy of providing junior enlisted members of the Armed Forces a monthly coupon for use in procuring food at commissaries.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 10, 2025

Mr. PANETTA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Defense to establish a pilot program to assess the efficacy of providing junior enlisted members of the Armed Forces a monthly coupon for use in procuring food at commissaries.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

4 It is the sense of Congress that—

5 (1) members of the Armed Forces and their
6 families deserve access to affordable and healthy
7 food options, including during their duty day;

1 (2) there has been increased awareness about
 2 the challenges members and their families face in ac-
 3 cessing affordable and healthy food options;

4 (3) those challenges have been especially acute
 5 for unaccompanied junior enlisted members who live
 6 in government-provided quarters on military installa-
 7 tions; and

8 (4) the Department of Defense should explore
 9 a variety of proposals for expanding the accessibility
 10 of healthy and affordable food options to members,
 11 especially members who live in unaccompanied hous-
 12 ing on military installations.

13 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE COUPONS TO JUNIOR**
 14 **ENLISTED MEMBERS TO PURCHASE FOOD AT**
 15 **COMMISSARIES.**

16 (a) PILOT PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Defense may
 17 conduct a pilot program to assess the efficacy of providing
 18 junior enlisted members of the Armed Forces a monthly
 19 coupon for use in procuring food at commissaries.

20 (b) SELECTION OF INSTALLATIONS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may conduct
 22 the pilot program authorized by subsection (a) at 2
 23 military installations.

1 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting installa-
2 tions for the pilot program authorized by subsection
3 (a), the Secretary shall consider installations with—

4 (A) large numbers of enlisted members
5 who live in unaccompanied housing;

6 (B) the largest ratios of enlisted members
7 to commissioned officers;

8 (C) unaccompanied housing that provides
9 access to functioning kitchens that residents
10 may use to prepare meals;

11 (D) commissaries that are experimenting
12 with or expanding their selection of nutritious
13 and minimally processed ready-made and easy-
14 to-make food options;

15 (E) low rates of attendance at dining fa-
16 cilities;

17 (F) low customer satisfaction ratings for
18 dining facilities, including installations with
19 complaints about dining facilities submitted
20 through the Interactive Customer Evaluation
21 system of the Department of Defense; and

22 (G) commissaries located within easily ac-
23 cessible distances from unaccompanied housing.

24 (c) COUPONS.—

1 (1) AMOUNT.—The Secretary may determine
2 the amount of the coupons to be provided under the
3 pilot program authorized by subsection (a).

4 (2) USE FOR FOOD AT COMMISSARIES RE-
5 QUIRED.—A coupon provided under the pilot pro-
6 gram authorized by subsection (a) may be used only
7 to purchase food at commissaries.

8 (3) PROHIBITED USES.—A coupon provided
9 under the pilot program authorized by subsection (a)
10 may not be used to—

11 (A) purchase alcoholic beverages or to-
12 bacco; or

13 (B) pay any deposit fee in excess of the
14 amount of the State fee reimbursement (if any)
15 required to purchase any food or food product
16 contained in a returnable bottle or can, without
17 regard to whether the fee is included in the
18 shelf price posted for the food or food product.

19 (4) SUPPLEMENT TO OTHER FOOD ASSIST-
20 ANCE.—A coupon provided to a member under the
21 pilot program authorized by subsection (a) shall sup-
22 plement and not supplant—

23 (A) the basic allowance for subsistence
24 under section 402 of title 37, United States
25 Code; and

1 (B) any program to provide meals or ra-
2 tions in kind for which the member is eligible.

3 (d) DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The pilot pro-
4 gram authorized by subsection (a) shall terminate not
5 later than one year after the date on which the pilot pro-
6 gram commences.

7 (e) REPORT REQUIRED.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
9 the termination under subsection (d) of the pilot
10 program authorized by subsection (a), the Secretary
11 of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense
12 committees a report detailing the results of the pilot
13 program.

14 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by para-
15 graph (1) shall include an assessment of the fol-
16 lowing:

17 (A) The use of coupons by members who
18 received coupons under the pilot program.

19 (B) The satisfaction of and feedback from
20 such members relating to the coupons.

21 (C) The impact of providing the coupons
22 on—

23 (i) the rates at which such members
24 used commissaries; and

1 (ii) the rates at which such members
2 used dining facilities on their installations.

3 (D) Historical rates of use of dining facili-
4 ties on installations and historical customer sat-
5 isfaction metrics for such facilities, including
6 the number of complaints with respect to such
7 facilities submitted through the Interactive Cus-
8 tomer Evaluation system of the Department of
9 Defense.

10 (E) The efficacy of the pilot program in—

11 (i) reducing food insecurity rates
12 among junior enlisted members;

13 (ii) increasing the availability of nutri-
14 tious food options for such members at
15 commissaries; and

16 (iii) increasing the availability of nu-
17 tritious food options for such members
18 generally, including such members living in
19 unaccompanied housing.

20 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 (1) CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES.—

22 The term “congressional defense committees” has
23 the meaning given the term in section 101(a) of title
24 10, United States Code.

1 (2) COUPON.—The term “coupon” means a
2 voucher or monetary benefit for a member of the
3 Armed Forces that may be used only at a com-
4 missary for the purchase of food.

5 (3) FOOD.—The term “food” means any food
6 or food product intended for home consumption, in-
7 cluding a ready-made food item.

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