

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2772

To authorize the Secretary of Defense to conduct a pilot program to provide coupons to junior enlisted members to purchase food at commissaries.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2025

Mr. WARNOCK (for himself and Mr. MARSHALL) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Defense to conduct a pilot program to provide coupons to junior enlisted members to purchase 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Commissary Healthy
5 Options and servicemember Welfare (CHOW) Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE COUPONS TO JUNIOR**
7 **ENLISTED MEMBERS TO PURCHASE FOOD AT**
8 **COMMISSARIES.**

9 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
10 gress that—

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

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

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

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

16 (b) PILOT PROGRAM.—

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

22 (2) SELECTION OF INSTALLATIONS.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may
24 conduct the pilot program authorized by para-
25 graph (1) at 2 military installations.

1 (B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting instal-
2 lations for the pilot program authorized by
3 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider in-
4 stallations with—

5 (i) large numbers of enlisted members
6 who live in unaccompanied housing;

7 (ii) the largest ratios of enlisted mem-
8 bers to commissioned officers;

9 (iii) unaccompanied housing that pro-
10 vides access to functioning kitchens that
11 residents may use to prepare meals;

12 (iv) commissaries that are experi-
13 menting with or expanding their selection
14 of nutritious and minimally processed
15 ready-made and easy-to-make food options;

16 (v) low rates of attendance at dining
17 facilities;

18 (vi) low customer satisfaction ratings
19 for dining facilities, including installations
20 with complaints about dining facilities sub-
21 mitted through the Interactive Customer
22 Evaluation system of the Department of
23 Defense; and

1 (vii) commissaries located within eas-
2 ily accessible distances from unaccom-
3 panied housing.

4 (3) COUPONS.—

5 (A) AMOUNT.—The Secretary may deter-
6 mine the amount of the coupons to be provided
7 under the pilot program authorized by para-
8 graph (1).

9 (B) USE.—

10 (i) IN GENERAL.—A coupon provided
11 under the pilot program authorized by
12 paragraph (1) may be used only to pur-
13 chase food at commissaries.

14 (ii) EXCLUSIONS.—A coupon provided
15 under the pilot program authorized by
16 paragraph (1) may not be used—

17 (I) to purchase alcoholic bev-
18 erages or tobacco; or

19 (II) to pay any deposit fee in ex-
20 cess of the amount of the State fee re-
21 imbursement (if any) required to pur-
22 chase any food or food product con-
23 tained in a returnable bottle or can,
24 without regard to whether the fee is

1 included in the shelf price posted for
2 the food or food product.

3 (C) SUPPLEMENT TO OTHER FOOD ASSIST-
4 ANCE.—A coupon provided to a member under
5 the pilot program authorized by paragraph (1)
6 shall be supplement and not supplant—

7 (i) the basic allowance for subsistence
8 under section 402 of title 37, United
9 States Code; and

10 (ii) any program to provide meals or
11 rations in kind for which the member is el-
12 igible.

13 (4) DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The pilot
14 program authorized by paragraph (1) shall termi-
15 nate not later than one year after the pilot program
16 commences.

17 (5) REPORT REQUIRED.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days
19 after the termination under paragraph (4) of
20 the pilot program authorized by paragraph (1),
21 the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the
22 congressional defense committees a report de-
23 tailing the results of the pilot program.

1 (B) ELEMENTS.—The report required by
2 subparagraph (A) shall include an assessment
3 of the following:

4 (i) The use of coupons by members
5 who received coupons under the pilot pro-
6 gram.

7 (ii) The satisfaction of and feedback
8 from such members relating to the cou-
9 pons.

10 (iii) The impact of providing the cou-
11 pons on—

12 (I) the rates at which such mem-
13 bers used commissaries; and

14 (II) the rates at which such
15 members used dining facilities on
16 their installations.

17 (iv) Historical rates of use of dining
18 facilities on installations and historical cus-
19 tomer satisfaction metrics for such facili-
20 ties, including the number of complaints
21 with respect to such facilities submitted
22 through the Interactive Customer Evalua-
23 tion system of the Department of Defense.

24 (v) The efficacy of the pilot program
25 in—

1 (I) reducing food insecurity rates
 2 among junior enlisted members;

3 (II) increasing the availability of
 4 nutritious food options for such mem-
 5 bers at commissaries; and

6 (III) increasing the availability of
 7 nutritious food options for such mem-
 8 bers generally, including such mem-
 9 bers living in unaccompanied housing.

10 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES.—
 12 The term “congressional defense committees” has
 13 the meaning given the term in section 101(a)(16) of
 14 title 10, United States Code.

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

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

○