



National AAFES (Exchange) Retired Employees Association
2303 RR 620 S Suite 160-105
Austin TX 78734

23 June 2024

Dear Members,

AREA is not satisfied with the pace of standardized installation access for retired DoD Civilians. Working with Exchange leadership, AREA has communicated its concerns regarding retiree access with OSD, Army and Air Force stakeholders. While this impacts all DoD Civilian retirees, AAFES retirees are uniquely impacted due to our shopping privileges. While the deadline for full implementation is not until May 2025, AREA does not believe the current situation is acceptable and is impacting one of our cherished retirement benefits. AREA is encouraging our members and other retirees to contact their representatives asking them to act in support of all DoD Civilian retirees. AREA is in contact with the Navy Exchange Retired Employees Association (NEREA) President who concurs with our call to action. NEREA has indicated they will participate with AREA on this issue.

To expedite this effort, AREA is providing relevant talking points to assist in developing communications with representatives. We have decided that this is better than providing a standard letter, which may be ignored if seen as a form letter. AREA recommends using bullet points and brevity to increase chances of the letters/emails being read. Be sure to point out Exchange retirees dedicated most of their lives not only to the Exchange systems and their mission to support the military, but to an individual commitment to the US military to serve in the US and Globally. Many have proven this through voluntary deployment to areas of conflict.

Contact information for Senators and Representatives (contact with Governors especially in states with a high Military and Retiree populations). This link provides contact information by mail, phone and most have a Contact Us Tab on their sites. This link also has contact information for state officials.

[Find and contact elected officials | USAGov](#)

AREA's Goal

- AREA would like to see the intent of the REAL ID Act fully implemented across DoD. (Ideally before the questionable May 2025 implementation deadline)
- Utilizing a scannable REAL ID i.e. Driver's License for common access to all installations unless access is determined by mission/security concerns.
- A Standard that the REAL ID would be accepted for access until that ID expired in which case access would be renewed when the ID is renewed unless for reasons of change of status of the ID holder or failure to pass a background check.
- Portability of that ID across installations unless access is restricted due to mission/security concerns.
- Include escort privileges for immediate family members. Would like to see spouses IDs included in DBIDS.

Impact

- The Exchanges provide a significant impact for MWR facilities, providing millions in dividends each year to support critical military Quality-of-Life programs. Sales determine the amount that is provided each year.

- Retirees of the Exchange systems earned the shopping benefit through a dedication to the Exchange and contribute significantly to the overall sales of the Exchange systems.
- The Exchanges provide significant employment opportunities for military spouses and veterans. The Army & Air Force Exchange Service has earned numerous awards for their employment of military spouses and veterans. For this to continue, the viability of the Exchange systems must be maintained. This means every effort must be made to maintain and build on shopping privileges to increase sales.
- Use of installation MWR facilities provides additional funds. If a retiree has a problem accessing the installation, those funds are lost.
- The change in stopping the use of the retiree CAC has impacted ALL DoD civilian retirees, not just those that retired from an Exchange system.

AREA hopes that most of you utilize the guidance and contact your elected officials. Please keep all communications professional and respectful. We are asking for their assistance and support. Remember only 18% of our Representatives /Senators have had military service so their understanding of the culture and organizations involved may be limited. Refrain from using acronyms, do not have expectations that they will initially understand who AAFES is or what we do.

Many of you may no longer visit installations so feel that it does not apply to you, but it does. Our Pension and benefits are dependent on the health of the Exchange. The shopping benefit is important to your fellow retirees, help support them.

Sincerely

Rick Fair
President
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