

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2011

The Honorable Robert Casey
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Toomey
United States Senate
B-40B Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Casey and Toomey:

On behalf of the families of 160,000 veterans and active-duty, Reserve, and Guard servicemen and women in Western Pennsylvania, the West Virginia panhandle, and eastern Ohio, we seek your continued support for construction of a Department of Defense-approved commissary in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. It is our understanding that all Morale, Welfare, and Recreation construction projects, including the Coraopolis commissary, are still awaiting approval by the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC). Towards that end, we specifically ask that you convey to SASC Chairman Carl Levin and Ranking Member John McCain the delegation's unwavering commitment to this project, for which financing and requisite Pentagon approvals have been secured, so that construction may begin as soon as possible.

As you recall, following the completion of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission process, which included the closure of the Charles E. Kelly Support Center, and the relocation of units to the Pittsburgh 99th Regional Readiness Command, the regional congressional delegation moved quickly to seek resolution on the future of the local commissary. As the BRAC report specifically stated, "DoD will address the further requirements for the Commissary and Exchange at the Kelly Support Center [where the commissary was located] after the BRAC recommendations are approved and the effects on the area population can be assessed."

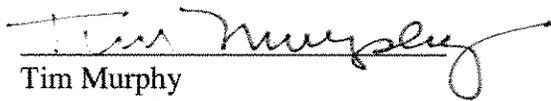
Pursuant to the report requirements and Department of Defense policy, the local installation chiefs at the 99th Army Reserve Regional Readiness Command, the 911th Air Force Reserve Airlift Wing, and the 171st National Guard Air Refueling Wing requested that the Commissary Operating Board conduct a needs analysis to determine whether a new facility should be built. In May 2009, after a review of the local support and usage of the existing commissary at the Kelly Support Center, the Pentagon officially determined that a new commissary should be built at the 99th Regional Readiness Command. In the approval memorandum, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness stated that the new commissary met the criterion required for construction: "RRC Coraopolis has an active duty mission; there is sufficient active duty population to support establishment...and the commissary operation is economically supportable."

The congressional delegation, state and local elected officials, and community leaders have worked tirelessly on several fronts to demonstrate that there exists a strong demand for commissary services in the tri-state area, and to secure all the funds, land, and approvals necessary for the commissary's construction. While the Kelly Support Center

was originally slated to close at the end of 2008, the delegation's efforts led to a commitment by the Department of Defense to keep the current commissary open until a new one could be built. This ensured veterans and military families have continuous access to the 13,000 items available at the commissary. The delegation then worked with Allegheny County officials to secure property for construction of a new commissary, and secured \$17.2 million in federal funds for the commissary's construction. Through a series of meetings with personnel at several departments within the Pentagon, the congressional delegation shepherded the project at each step of the approval process.

Today, the veterans and military families of the tri-state region are one step away from seeing a new commissary open its doors. It is our understanding that the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee have already reviewed and approved the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation construction proposals for the upcoming year, but that the staff of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel may still be reviewing the Pentagon's construction proposal. Once the Senate Armed Services Chairman and Ranking Member notify the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness that the projects are approved, DeCA can solicit bids for construction of the Coraopolis commissary. We thank you in advance for your continued support of our region's veterans and active-duty military families and appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Tim Murphy
Member of Congress



Mark Critz
Member of Congress



David McKinley
Member of Congress



Bill Johnson
Member of Congress



Jason Altmire
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



Bill Shuster
Member of Congress