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MILITARY FAMILIES CHALLENGE CONGRESS:
If You Don't De-fund the War, You Are Abandoning Our Troops

February 15, 2007, Washington DC – Today, as the House debates a non-binding resolution on the President's proposed escalation of the war, **Military Families Speak Out** (MFSO) delivered an open letter to all Senators and Members of Congress challenging the prevailing logic that de-funding the Iraq War means de-funding or abandoning our troops in the field. The letter is signed by over 200 members of MFSO with loved ones currently in Iraq or soon to be deployed. Traditionally, military families have honored an unwritten "code of silence" and kept their views out of the public eye. These military families are breaking that code of silence to support their loved ones and all of our troops. They are calling on Congress to support our troops by de-funding the war, bringing our troops home now and taking care of them when they get here. The letter reads in part:

"Senators and Members of Congress, you need to know that by continuing to fund this war and leaving our loved ones in Iraq, you are abandoning them. ...Make no mistake about this, you can not both oppose and fund this war. You may be afraid for your political futures... We are afraid for the lives of our loved ones. ...The Constitution gave Congress the 'power of the purse' for a reason. We urge you, we expect you, to use this power now... [I]f you vote to continue funding the war in Iraq, it will no longer be President Bush's war. It will be yours. If you fund it, you've bought it and you own it. And we will remember."

"Our loved ones showed their courage when they signed up to put themselves in harm's way to defend our country and our Constitution; you who serve in Congress should have the courage by use your Constitutional authority to cut off funding for this unjustifiable war and bring our troops home," said **MFSO member Dena Ciferri of Fort Bliss, Texas**, a signer of the letter to Congress whose husband is a platoon sergeant in the Army and currently serving in Iraq.

"My son, a Marine, is preparing for his third deployment, his second to Iraq," stated **MFSO member Deborah Coller from Pinckney, Michigan**, one of the signers of the letter to Congress. "Rest assured, voting 'NO' on any additional funds for the war in Iraq is NOT abandoning my son. Far from it. Why would I, a mother who raised her son with love and support to do what is right, support denying him and his fellow Marines, soldiers, airmen, and sailors what they need? Find the courage to do what is right. Bring the troops home by closing the checkbook NOW!"

Military Families Speak Out is the largest organization of military families opposing a war in the history of the United States. The group currently has over 3,200 military families with loved ones currently serving in Iraq, loved ones soon to deploy or redeploy, loved ones who have returned physically and/or psychologically wounded, and loved ones who died as a result of the war.

A copy of the letter sent to Congress by MFSO is available upon request or can be viewed at www.mfso.org. Many signers of the letter are available for interview.

For more information about Military Families Speak Out, please visit: www.mfso.org