



CONTACT:

Sean Donahue, Military Families Speak Out, 617-983-0710, press@mfso.org

Nancy Lessin, Military Families Speak Out, 617-320-5301, mfso@mfso.org

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MILITARY AND GOLD STAR FAMILIES MOURN
4,000th TROOP DEATH IN IRAQ

*Family Members of Fallen Troops, and Families of Those Currently Serving in Iraq
Available for Interview*

March 23, 2008; Nationwide -- As the sixth year of the war in Iraq begins, the next grim milestone has just been reached: the 4,000th troop death. Military Families Speak Out (MFSO), the largest organization of military families to oppose a war in this country's history, asks all in the nation to stop and reflect on the human toll of this war, and press Congress – including the major presidential candidates -- to reject President Bush's request for another \$70 billion to continue the war, and instead appropriate all funds needed to bring our troops home quickly and safely, and take care of them when they get here.

"Every day an American family answers a knock at the door and hears their worst fear spoken. A casualty officer brings the news of death in Iraq and an end to all the hopes that family had for their loved one," said Celeste Zappala, of Philadelphia, PA, whose son was killed in Iraq in 2004. "Yet the war goes on, paid for by the U.S. Congress. In this election season, we hear a lot about leadership. Where are the leaders who will finally be brave enough to speak out for the absolute end to funding this disastrous war? Who will finally show the courage necessary to end the needless sacrifice of our troops?"

Celeste Zappala's son, Sgt. Sherwood Baker, served in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, and was killed in Iraq on April 26, 2004 while protecting the Iraq Survey Group as they searched for weapons of mass destruction. Sgt Baker was the first Pennsylvania National Guard member killed in combat since 1945. Zappala is a member of Gold Star Families Speak Out, a national chapter of Military Families Speak Out for those whose loved ones have died as a result of the war in Iraq.

Tonight, Zappala will take part in a solemn vigil on the west side of Philadelphia City Hall at 15th & Market Streets, beginning at 5:00 p.m.. Participants will read the names of Americans and Iraqis killed in the war in Iraq. Members of Military Families Speak Out plan similar events in cities around the country..

The families of troops currently serving in Iraq have been nervously watching the death toll rise as well. **Ellen Barfield**, is a U.S. Army veteran and a member of Military Families Speak Out from **Baltimore, MD**. She said " *4,000 families now have a terrible hole which will never be filled. And so many more Iraqi families. With my sister having just deployed to Iraq, I am acutely aware of the horrors and dangers she faces. As a veteran myself, and an activist, I have not been able to turn away as so many other U.S. citizens can.*

"In this election season Representatives and Senators -- including the ones running for President -- must finally realize they cannot blame it all on President Bush, but must take up their responsibility to immediately cut all funding for continuing the war, and pay only for quick and safe withdrawal for all of our troops and decent ongoing care for our veterans."

Members of Military Families Speak Out and its national chapter Gold Star Families Speak Out are available for interview -- including families whose loved ones died as a result of the war in Iraq, and families with loved ones currently serving in Iraq.

Military Families Speak Out (MFSO) is a national organization of over 3,900 families who are opposed to the war in Iraq and have loved ones who serve or have served in the military since the fall of 2002. Gold Star Families Speak Out is a national chapter of MFSO with families whose loved ones died as a result of the war.

For more information about Military Families Speak Out, please visit www.mfso.org ; for more information about the chapter Gold Star Families Speak Out see www.gsfsso.org