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Media Availability

GOLD STAR FAMILIES RESPOND TO PRESIDENT BUSH: NO HONOR COMES TO OUR FALLEN LOVED ONES FROM MORE DEATHS IN IRAQ

December 20, 2006 – At a news conference this morning, President Bush was asked about whether he can sleep at night, understanding that his Iraq policies that have not succeeded. He responded by saying that the most painful aspect of his presidency has been knowing that good men and women have died in combat, and went on to say, “I reach out to a lot of the families. I spend time with them. ...They — most people have asked me to do one thing, and that is to make sure that their child didn't die in vain.” In response, members of Military Families Speak Out and its chapter Gold Star Families Speak Out challenged President Bush’s response.

“The only thing worse than having so many die in a war that should never have happened is to have this war claim even more lives. Those who have already died will best be honored by a nation and a Congress with the courage to stop the carnage and end the war,” said Nancy Lessin, co-founder of Military Families Speak Out.

“I have tried to speak to Bush on numerous occasions, and he has never tried to speak to me,” said Celeste Zappala of Philadelphia, PA, whose son Sergeant Sherwood Baker was killed in Baghdad on April 26, 2004 while searching for nonexistent weapons of mass destruction. *“I believe that my son’s death was unnecessary, and I work relentlessly to bring the troops home now and to spare other families from the agony that my family experienced when my son died.”*

“There are many of us Gold Star Families that say NO MORE,” said Vickie Castro of Corona, CA whose son Cpl. Jonathan Castro was killed in a suicide bombing in Mosul on December 21, 2004. *“Not one more death for a war that should have never been started. Not one more ‘We regret to inform you’ delivered to a family in the name of an unnecessary and immoral war. Not one more unseen flag draped coffin for a situation that has no military solution. Not one more fatherless child so that Bush can ‘stay the course’.”*

Michelle Deford of Colton, OR, whose son David was killed in Baghdad, Iraq on September 25, 2004 said *“I know that my son’s life was wasted, thrown away like it was nothing. What we need to do is bring the rest of our sons and daughters home now.”*

Dianne Santoriello of Verona, PA, whose son, Neil was killed in action near Fallujah on August 13, 2004 said, *“I would welcome the chance to explain to the President why my son died in vain, why those who die today or tomorrow or next week do not validate in any way my son's death. I have not slept well at all since I found out my son was dead Perhaps when this war is over we will sleep.”*

Military Families Speak Out (MFSO) is a national organization of over 3,100 families with loved ones in the military who oppose the U.S. military occupation of Iraq. **Gold Star Families Speak Out (GSFSO)** is a chapter of Military Families Speak Out, made up of families whose loved ones died as a result of the war in Iraq.

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