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**MILITARY FAMILIES AND IRAQ WAR VETS SEEK MEETING WITH
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD**

Families of Extended and Re-Deployed Troops Ask for an End to the “Back Door Draft” and for All Troops to be Brought Home Now

Washington D.C., October 31, 2006 – Military Families Speak Out (MFSO), a national organization of people opposed to the war in Iraq who have relatives or loved ones in the military, sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld that he will receive today requesting a meeting on November 9, 2006 to discuss the impacts on servicemen and women and their families of troop extensions, stop-loss orders, involuntary re-calls, multiple re-deployments to Iraq and other aspects of the “back door draft.” The organization expects over 30 military families from California, Colorado, Missouri, New Jersey and other areas around the U.S. to gather in Washington, D.C. after the November 7th Congressional elections. The families also plan to deliver a petition to Secretary Rumsfeld and to Congress calling for an end to the back door draft and for all troops to be brought home now.

Since July of this year alone, 7,500 troops have had their tours of duty extended in Iraq, including 3,500 members of the 172nd Stryker Brigade, poised to return home after a year long deployment, who were extended an additional four months as of July 2006; as well as 4,000 soldiers with the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division who were extended in Ramadi in September 2006. Additionally, in August, 2006, the Marine Corps announced the recall of 2,500 inactive reservists to active duty; and this month, and the Army announced it would be keeping 120,000 troops in Iraq until 2010, requiring more extensive use of National Guard and Reserve forces. Servicemen and women continue to be placed under stop-loss orders and held in the military after their years of service are up, while many troops are experiencing multiple deployments,

Shortly after the close of the deadliest month for U.S. troops in Iraq since January, 2005, military families with loved ones in the 172nd Stryker Brigade and the 1st Brigade of the 1st Armored Division; families with loved ones in the Marines’ Individual Ready Reserve at risk for recall; families with loved ones serving multiple deployments; National Guard families and others will come to Washington, D.C. to make their case for an end to the back-door draft and an end to the Iraq war.

“Twice as a mother, I have had to see my son off to war,” stated MFSO member Tina Richards from Salem, Missouri, whose son in the Marines Individual Ready Reserves now faces call-back to Iraq. *“The pain and horror of what our family has been through while he was gone is a shadow to the horrors of war he had endured. Yet, I find my family torn apart, our hearts wrenched in fear, that he will be called back into service and sent to the hell he has already twice survived. Stop this back door draft.”*

MFSO member Rich Moniak of Juneau, Alaska whose son Michael is in the 172nd Stryker Brigade that was told in late July, 2006 that they were to redeploy to Baghdad during the very hours that they were preparing to leave Iraq explained: *“They are still in Baghdad, and we at home cannot trust the Pentagon to bring them home at the end of this extension. Instead, we face each and every day fearing that unwanted knock on the door or a late night phone call. The redeployment is a symptom of the larger failures of this war and occupation.”*

Military families coming in to Washington, D.C. to meet with Secretary Rumsfeld will be joined by other families on Veterans Day, November 11th, when Military Families Speak Out will honor the over 2,800 American service members and tens of thousands of Iraqi children, women, and men who have died as a result of the war in Iraq, with an exhibit of flags and photographs on the National Mall.

A copy of the letter that MFSO sent to Secretary Rumsfeld is attached to this email. For more information about *Military Families Speak Out*, please visit: <http://www.mfso.org>

To arrange an interview with a military family, call Ateqah Khaki, Riptide Communications, at 212-260-5000