



STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

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For Immediate Release
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Letter-to-the-Editor
(384 words)

“Remember the price of democracy this July 4th”

June 24, 2005

Dear Editor,

Recently, I delivered a high school commencement address, and - after commending the graduates - I reminded them of the great opportunities and liberties we enjoy as United States citizens. We sometimes take for granted such sacred rights as the freedom to speak or worship, or a vigorous free press.

These new graduates were incoming freshman on September 11, 2001. Their high school experience has been tempered by the Global War on Terrorism, which has now lasted longer than World War II. Military service is the next step for some of these graduates, who reside in a community with a long tradition of sending its sons and daughters off to war. These people know democracy is not free.

Soon we celebrate our nation's independence with picnics, baseball and fireworks. The July 4th fireworks tradition began in Philadelphia in 1777 as the Revolution raged. Our Founding Fathers risked everything to free us from King George's tyranny and the colonists were willing to sacrifice everything. As we enjoy our barbecues and parades, let's pause in tribute to those colonists who paid the initial price for our freedom, as well as the Illinois men and women now engaged in the Global War on Terrorism. They won't be celebrating July 4th at a family picnic.

As you read this, thousands of Illinois National Guard members and reservists are patrolling the streets of Baghdad and hills of Afghanistan. As they assist in the building of free societies, they know first-hand democracy is not free. Part of that price is being paid by the families of these citizen soldiers, whose military pay is often much less than their civilian salary.

That's why the "Illinois Military Family Relief Act" is so needed. Through the fund, families of National Guard members or reservists may receive assistance for expenses such as rent or groceries; \$3.2 million has already been distributed to 6,100 Illinois military families.

Illinois citizens have donated generously to the fund already via a state income tax form check-off and such fundraising efforts as bake sales. To truly honor those who have defended our freedoms, celebrate the Spirit of '76 by donating \$17.76 or whatever you can afford to the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund, PO Box 8889, Springfield, IL 62791. All donations go directly to military families. For more: www.OperationHomefront.org.

Sincerely,

Pat Quinn
Illinois Lieutenant Governor