

Governor Quinn Encourages Support for Illinois Military Family Relief Fund

Written by Ryan C. Woods
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Voluntary Tax Check-Off has Helped Program Support More Than 27,000 Military Families with Nearly \$15 Million; Served as a Model for Other States

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn today marked the 10-year anniversary of the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund (IMFRF) by encouraging everyone in Illinois to take advantage of the voluntary tax check-off that helps military families who are struggling financially during deployment. The initiative is part of Governor Quinn’s agenda to make Illinois the most Veterans-friendly state in the nation and ensure servicemembers have the support they need when they return home. Spearheaded in 2003 by then-Lieutenant Governor Quinn, the program has helped more than 27,000 Illinois military families with nearly \$15 million in grants.

“Our servicemembers and their families sacrifice so much every day, and this easy tax check-off is a convenient way to help military families in need,” Governor Quinn said. “Please take minute when doing you taxes this year to check-off a few dollars on the state income tax form to help our heroes.”

As Lieutenant Governor, Governor Quinn spearheaded the initiative to create the IMFRF after several military spouses – such as Mary Beth Beiersdorf of Arlington Heights and Brenda Robinzine of Oak Park –contacted him in 2001 with the idea of setting up a mechanism to aid military families with such expenses as groceries, rent or utility bills. Quinn then led a grassroots effort which featured the passage of resolutions by cities and counties for two years, after which lawmakers voted to make IMFR the law of the land.

The IMFRF has served as a national model, with more than 35 other states having since passed similar ways for taxpayers to voluntarily help those who have borne the battle. Governor Quinn was joined at today’s event by Sgt. Jason Hoster - an Illinois Army National Guardsman from Chicago and recent IMFRF beneficiary. Sgt. Hoster shared his story of how the fund helped his family after two deployments in Afghanistan and Kuwait. Just before his latest deployment, his father began chemotherapy for lung cancer which had spread

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to his blood. Hoster received two \$500 payments from the IMFRF which he used to help make his father more comfortable.

“Sergeant Hoster is a good example of an Illinois Guardsman who truly deserves and appreciates the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund,” Brigadier General Richard J. Hayes, Jr., Director of the Joint Staff of the Illinois National Guard said. “His story is just one of many within the Illinois National Guard the past 10 years. Thanks to the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund, our Soldiers and Airmen can have an easier transition home from deployment, as they can focus more on their families and less on finances.”

Donations to the fund can also be made by visiting [OperationHomefront.org](http://operationhomefront.org/). Checks can be made payable to the Illinois Military Family Relief and mailed to: The Illinois Department of Military Affairs, ATTN: IMFRF, 1301 N. MacArthur Boulevard, Springfield, Illinois 62702-2399.

Governor Quinn today also noted that April is the “Month of the Military Child,” and recognized Illinois’ third year as a member of the Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission (MIC3), which helps children affected by frequent moves and deployments by aiding timely enrollment, transfer or records and student placement. He also recognized the Illinois National Guard Youth Program, which in 2012 directly supported 2,360 military children, including dozens of events helping children of deploying troops and assisting in the transition of military members back to their families after deployment. The Youth Program also assisted 68 Gold Star children of fallen servicemembers by distributing Grief Packets and providing access to professional counseling.

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