

**HB**

**184**

# Alaska State Legislature

## House of Representatives

Official Business



State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

### SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR CS HB 184 (FIN) BY: Representative Bob Roses

**TITLE:** "An Act relating to a commemorative troops license plate and to license plates available to disabled veterans; and providing for an effective date."

CS HB184(FIN) House Bill 184 brings the Support Our Troops commemorative license plate to Alaska, sponsored by Support Our Troops® Inc. The plate will be accompanied by a \$40 fee which will be collected and may be appropriated by the legislature to Support Our Troops for redistribution in Alaska. SOT will establish an Alaska Disbursement Board whose purpose is to determine the best manner to distribute funds. This local control is an essential part of this system.

SOT® started the process of issuing Official Support Our Troops plates in some 39 states, with around 20 already completed, and the necessities are in place for issuance in about 12 more in 2007, with 7 in the planning for 2008.

Founded by civilians as a concrete statement of thanks to the troops for their service, Support Our Troops® is a 501(c) (3) national public-benefit charity group dedicated to assisting the troops and their families. SOT provides simple means through which America's families can protect the integrity of their troops' families, while the troops are off protecting all of our families. SOT's business model is to create recurring revenue streams such as license plates, t-shirts, bumper stickers and the like.

Additionally, CS HB 184(FIN) allows qualified disabled veterans and Alaska residents who are 65 years or older with a proven disability to elect to receive a plate that does not display the international symbol of accessibility and does not carry with it special parking privileges. Also, recent additions to CS HB 184(FIN) include an increase in the penalty for updating your name and address information with DMV, the use as an affirmative defense proof that insurance was in effect at the time of an accident, an increase in the penalty for driving without insurance, and the inclusion of towing costs to the penalty for using a motor vehicle in the commission of a crime.

I urge your support of this legislation.

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### Sectional Analysis for CS HB 184(FIN) BY: Representative Bob Roses

**TITLE:** "An Act relating to a commemorative troops license plate and to license plates available to disabled veterans; relating to mandatory motor vehicle insurance, license suspensions, mandatory impoundments of vehicles used in certain offenses, and notices relating to motor vehicles and driver's licenses; relating to registration of vehicles for disabled persons; and providing for an effective date"

**Section 1.** Amends current statute language increasing the penalty for not providing current information to the DMV to a fine not to exceed \$300.

**Section 2.** Amends current statute language to allow for qualified disabled veterans to elect to receive a plate under (p) or (q) of this section that does not display the international symbol of accessibility and does not carry with it special parking privileges.

**Section 3.** Adds a new section (x) to AS 28.10.181 designating that special request plates commemorating and supporting troops. It allows that the commissioner (of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development) shall determine the design and color of the plates. This section allows the department to disapprove the issuance of plates and for the substitution of alternative language.

**Section 4.** Amends current statute language to allow for residents with proof of a disability limiting or impairing their ability to walk an exemption from the registration fee required.

**Section 5.** Adds a new section (17) to AS 28.10.421(d) outlining the fee amounts and the regularity of the collection. It further states that the funds may be appropriated by the legislature to Support Our Troops, Inc. for the benefit of the troops and their families in accordance with its articles of incorporation and bylaws.

**Section 6.** Adds a new subsection providing that if a person's driver's license is suspended because a lack of insurance paperwork, it is a defense to the criminal charge of driving without a valid license that the driver in fact had the legally required auto insurance.

**Section 7.** Amends current statute language increasing the penalty for uninsured motorists from \$0 to "at least \$500 and up to 90 days in jail."

**Section 8.** Amends current statute language to allow the DMV to use the driver's last known address to provide notice of suspended license.

**Section 9.** Amends current statute language to include the cost of towing as part of the penalty for using a motor vehicle in the commission of a crime.

**Section 10.** This section states the bill will take effect on July 1, 2007.

**Summary of Changes from  
CS HB 184(MLV) to CS HB 184 (FIN)  
BY: Representative Bob Roses**

House Finance added the following sections:

**Section 1.** Increasing the penalty for not providing current information to the DMV to a fine not to exceed \$300.

**Section 4.** Allowing for residents with proof of a disability limiting or impairing their ability to walk an exemption from the registration fee required.

**Section 6.** Providing that if a person's driver's license is suspended because a lack of insurance paperwork, it is a defense to the criminal charge of driving without a valid license that the driver in fact had the legally required auto insurance.

**Section 7.** Increasing the penalty for uninsured motorists from \$0 to "at least \$500 and up to 90 days in jail."

**Section 8.** Allowing the DMV to use the driver's last known address to provide notice of suspended license.

**Section 9.** Including the cost of towing as part of the penalty for using a motor vehicle in the commission of a crime.

House Finance also changed the following language:

Page 2, line 15, following "may issue"

Delete "'Support Our Troops' registration plates to supporters of Support Our Troops, Inc."

Insert "registration plates commemorating and supporting troops."

Page 2, line 23, following (17)

Delete "Support Our Troops"

Page 2, line 31, following "legislature"

Delete "to Support Our Troops, Inc., for the benefit of the troops and their families in accordance with its articles of incorporation and bylaws."

Insert "solely for the purpose of providing benefits within the state of Alaska to troops and their families."

The effect was to eliminate the fund direction to a specified non-profit charity and to further state that the funds raised will be used solely in Alaska for our local troops and their families.

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: 1  
 Bill Version: CSHB 184(MLV)  
 (H) Publish Date: 4/4/07

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Administration  
 Title: "An Act relating to a commemorative troops license plate..." RDU: Division of Motor Vehicles  
 Component: Motor Vehicles  
 Sponsor: Rep. Roses  
 Requester: \_\_\_\_\_ Component No.: 2348

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Travel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contractual	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Supplies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Land & Structures	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grants & Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1003 GF Match	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1004 GF	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1037 GF/Mental Health	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other (Specify Type—Do not abbreviate)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2007) cost: 0.0  
 Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2008 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill will allow the Division of Motor Vehicles to offer a special "Support Our Troops" license plate. This optional plate would require a fee of \$40.00 at inception and also at each registration renewal, in addition to the registration fee required. The additional fee will be accounted for separately and may be appropriated by the legislature to Support Our Troops, Inc.

As this bill does not affect the vehicle registration we do not anticipate any change in revenue. Also, DMV does not anticipate any measurable expenses as a result of this bill. However the revenue derived from the \$40.00 fee is indeterminate.

Prepared by: Duane Bannock, Director Phone 269 5559  
 Division: Motor Vehicles Date/Time 3/19/07 10:00am  
 Approved by: Kevin Brooks, Deputy Commissioner Date 3/20/07 9:00am  
 Agency: Department of Administration



## **Support Our Troops, Inc.**

### **Disbursement Methodology Policy**

ADOPTED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 9-20-2005, REVISED 8-25-06

#### **Background**

It is SOT policy to make distributions to the maximum extent possible by using local Disbursement Boards and by using existing military charitable entities, coupled with a set of disbursement priorities. It is SOT's preference to only occasionally make direct distributions to individual recipients, unless that method is deemed best for purposes of local officials. SOT prefers to function as a revenue-generating organization, and have the functions of determination of entitlement and need performed by local Disbursement Boards and by existing military charitable entities, all based on a set of disbursement priorities.

#### **Guiding Principal**

SOT is trying to meet the worst needs first based on the Western principal of women and children first.

#### **Disbursement Boards**

One or more local Disbursement Boards are being established in each state as the best method of promptly and privately meeting the needs of the local troops and their families with immediate local knowledge.

The local Disbursement Boards will be constituted from designees of the various services, and will serve without compensation as adjunct duties to their normal duties in their services. These designees may be assembled from assistance disbursement officers, readiness officers, and the like, from within each service, because they know their local families and troops, who needs assistance, and are most likely to have a relationship with the applicable branches or agencies. They will have current local knowledge which alleviates delays and problems created by the privacy act. The local Disbursement Boards will follow guidelines regarding determination of entitlement, degree of need, and procedure. They will make decisions using those guidelines, forms and procedures. SOT may adopt and use existing application forms and procedures familiar to service members from within the services. The local Disbursement Boards may also disburse based on pre-screened and qualified recipients referred to them by other military charities and agencies in accordance with these procedures. The local Disbursement Boards will be lodged with the military charities as a referral resource.

This methodology enables SOT to promptly meet the needs of local troops and their families, because the local Disbursement Board has immediate local personal knowledge of who needs what. They are comprised of local faces that the troops and

Support Our Troops, Inc.

Policy – Disbursement Methodology Policy – 9-20-05; revised 8-25-06

1 of 2



## **Support Our Troops, Inc.**

### **Disbursement Methodology Policy**

ADOPTED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 9-20-2005, REVISED 8-25-06

their families currently know and deal with. They will be less hampered by privacy act restrictions which inhibit information exchange between federal and state levels, between agencies, and between branches, and frequently frustrate even agencies and services trying to help one another's members. They will avoid people having to shop from door to door to locate assistance, because the troops and their families can talk to people they already know.

#### **Military Charities, Organs, Funds.**

A secondary disbursement methodology is SOT making disbursement through existing charities and organs within and without the services which provide aid and assistance to service members and their families. To date, SOT has identified the below-listed entities through which SOT can make disbursement to ultimate beneficiaries. Entities may be added or withdrawn from time to time. Funds will be disbursed through these entities upon their agreement to further disburse them based upon SOT criteria. These entities may also refer pre-screened and qualified recipients to SOT for disbursement:

- State National Guard Assistance Funds and Relief Funds
- State National Guard Family Readiness
- HomesForOurTroops.org -- 501c3
- Special Operations Warrior Foundation -- 501c3
- Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund – 501c3
- Survivor and Dependents Educational Assistance Program -- VA administered
- CIA Officers Memorial Fund -- 501c3
- Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, Inc. – 501c3
- Dependents Educational Assistance Program -- VA administered
- National Military Family Association -- 501c3
- Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
- Army Emergency Relief -- Official Entity of US Army
- Navy-Marine Relief Society -- Official Entity of US Navy and Marines
- Air Force Aid Society -- Official Entity of US Air Force
- Coast Guard Mutual Assistance – 501c3
- Intrepid Museum Foundation/Intrepid Family Support Fund – 501c3

Support Our Troops, Inc.

Policy – Disbursement Methodology Policy – 9-20-05; revised 8-25-06

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## **We Are Patriotic Private Money™**

*Just think about it for a moment. We live in the most wonderfully adventurous and free country on planet earth. We have more choices available to us than anyone in any other country. Why? In large part because of those of us who keep the wolves at bay. And thanks to them we can be lazy or productive, a fool or an intellectual, waste our time or spend it wisely, work for another or build our own business, ad infinitum. We can be a beach bum or build a billion dollar company.*

*It's up to us. And no one is locking American women in their homes and painting the windows black like the Taliban did, running gulags, secreting us off to concentration camps, "disappearing" our family members or neighbors like in Central America, or placing us in situations where we have to stand in front of a tank in our own country to try and defend our freedoms like in China. We have it great. Why? Because a few of Americans voluntarily choose to risk their persons and lives to keep the barbarians away from us.*

Below is a list of specific needs that Support Our Troops® is working to address. On behalf of the troops sacrificing to keep us all safe, we thank you for all donations.

**Education.** Education is an important focus of SOT. SOT plans the following assistance, working to fill any time gaps or coverage gaps in government-funded programs:

College children of troops members struggling while their parent(s) is on long term active duty. Why should they have to wait to go to college due to finances because dad or mom is off protecting us? We are mostly ready for our kids' college education in one manner or another. Are their kids supposed to just wait because they are off protecting us safe? We don't think so.

Children of parents who were residents of particular states for less than one year before the death or disability so they don't get caught in a gap when transitioning between states.

Most public funds do not pay for non-public universities, or for seminary. SOT can. And a child might decide due to a parent's service, injury, or death to attend seminary, become a chaplain in the military, or become a doctor.

Family education during the 1-2 year gap in between when a soldier-parent is injured and has reached MMI and can be given a disability rating by the USDVA and coverage awarded.

Out-of-state education whether public, private, or seminary, or military school if is the student's direction. An injury or a parent's death sometime causes drastic changes in life's direction.

Post-graduate education. PhD, Masters, technical college, dentist, doctor, trade school, etc.

**State Mobilization.** The National Guard gets little to nothing during mobilizations by the Governor of the particular state for hurricanes, disasters, emergency alerts or the like. National Guard members typically don't get their first paycheck for over a month after being activated. SOT may assist with families while soldiers are deployed for things such as rent, mortgage, food, utilities, emergency transportation, funerals for other family members, medical and dental, bills, essential car repairs, pay problems, and other emergency needs.

**Schooling.** Let's provide educational assistance for children of mobilized troops who have not been killed or injured, but are also not at home at their regular job earning what they used to and it's time for the kids to go to college. We're earning what we're used to earning and our kids are safe and on their way to college. Why should our neighbors' kids have to wait to go to college because dad or mom is off protecting us and not earning what they are used to earning?

**Family at the Bedside.** SOT will assist with covering cost of food, lodging, travel and lost income to enable families of the injured troops spending spent weeks, even months, away from home to be with their spouse, son or daughter who is recovering at a military hospital. Loved ones who are there because they worked to protect our families. Family members take leave from their jobs, often without pay. And they incur additional expenses - lodging, travel, food - all while trying to meet obligations at home. And all to stand by their loved ones who stood up for all of us. The following examples are from organizations that know immediately who these people are when the moment arrives and the need arises, and which SOT will fund because of their specialty knowledge and immediacy of information:

Example #1: Dustin, Lance Corporal, USMC, Michigan Dustin, a Lance Corporal from Michigan, was severely injured during his service overseas in Iraq. He was riddled with shrapnel and was on a ventilator in the ICU. The shrapnel caused the loss of one eye, and possibly his remaining eyesight in the other. One of his legs was severely burned with an open fracture and major tissue damage. His right hand was badly damaged, and two of his fingers on his right hand were amputated. When Dustin arrived at Bethesda Naval Hospital, his mother and father flew from Michigan to be at their son's bedside. His father works in a factory, and took great pains to leave work and their other children behind during this difficult time for the entire family. His father said he would stay as long as it took for his son to recover. His mother had to return to Michigan to take care of the other children, and so she wouldn't lose her job. It was difficult for Dustin's family to make ends meet at home. His father's jeopardized income made it difficult to keep up all the traveling, transportation, and living expenses that added up during this time. Thanks to charitable donations from a patriotic fund they were able to pay their bills at home.

Example #2: Jonathan, Lance Corporal, USMC, South Carolina Jonathan, a Lance Corporal from South Carolina, sustained a severe brain injury from an IED explosion to the head and face. After a long battle, he was transferred to the VA Hospital in Tampa, FL. He was beginning to walk again, but his brain recovery still had a long way to go. His family was hopeful for a full recovery, but Jonathan had a major setback and was put back on life support. His mother, a single mom, has six other children. Two of them are in college, one on a scholarship. She was able to travel from Bethesda, MD to Florida to remain at Jonathan's side. One charitable fund was able to assist her with her hotel room in Tampa. Another

charitable fund was able to help her with living expenses and bills at home. When Jonathan was put back on life support, his mother was with him, but not the rest of his family. Jonathan went into cardiac arrest, and then a coma, with little chance of recovery. A charitable fund was able to fly all of Jonathan's family to his bedside. Shortly after their arrival, Jonathan died peacefully, surrounded by his entire family.

**Benefit Timing Gaps.** Often there are harmful gaps between when the need arises and benefits arrive. Many times there is a one to two year gap between when one of our troops is injured and when he or she has reached MMI and can be given a disability rating by the USDVA.

Example from 2006: One Florida Guardsman came home brain damaged from an IED. He has three kids. It has been over one year. He has still not been approved for permanent disability. He is waiting for determination of MMI. His wife does not have marketable skills. If she were to work, the gain would be offset by the cost of child care, because the Guardsman cannot care for them. The problem therefor is the interim gap.

**Entitlements.** Many government benefits only apply when the National Guard is mobilized by the President, as opposed to the Governor. This leaves coverage gaps during natural disaster mobilization, and for training accidents, or action during a state emergency or terrorist event. Guard Seminars and Training. Assist with funds for supplies, food and beverages for Guard Family Readiness training seminars for the troop's families.

**Car Repairs.** Dad is off protecting us. The car breaks down. It needs an alternator before mom can take the kids to school, go to work, or go get groceries.

**Child Care Assistance.** This is sometimes a critical needed when a surviving spouse is caring for or visiting a recuperating or hospitalized soldier. Gap Mortgage Payment. Temporary mortgage assistance is sometimes needed to avoid foreclosure until the family can downsize or move following a death.

**Emergency Travel.** Arises in many uncovered forms while troops are serving overseas.

**Sympathetic Private Organization.** Many times the government has found that having a sympathetic private organization is advantageous for providing certain services which the government cannot do promptly, or cannot do due to legal restraints on public funds, or cannot commence until after a lengthy interstitial procedural period.

Support Our Troops® is that organization.



Examples of typical disbursement language in other states statutes

Michigan	Plate funds disbursed "on a monthly basis to Support Our Troops, Inc., which shall expend the money received under this section for troops and their families in accordance with its articles of incorporation."
Mississippi	"\$24 of each additional fee collected on distinctive tags issued pursuant to this section shall be disbursed to Support Our Top, Inc."
North Carolina	The Division shall transfer the money derived from the sale of Support Our Troops plates to Support Our Troops, Inc., to be used to provide support and assistance to the troops and their families.
Arkansas	The division shall remit the \$25 fees collected on a monthly basis to the special interest organization for which each special license plate was purchased.
Oklahoma	\$25 of the proceeds of the annual use fee shall be distributed to Support Our Troops Inc., which shall use the proceeds for the benefit of Oklahoma troops and their families.
Louisiana	The monies received from the additional twenty-five dollar fee shall be disbursed to Support Our Troops, Inc.
Georgia	"The funds raised by the sale of this plate shall be disbursed to Georgia Support Our Troops, Inc." (GSAT is a subsidiary charity of SOT, Inc)
South Carolina	Any portion of the additional thirty-dollar fee not set aside by the Comptroller General to defray costs of production and distribution must be distributed to Support Our Troops, Inc.

The logic of most states is that the system is self-regulating in the free market: people know they are donating to a charity. If there is a problem with the charity, people will not donate by buying the plates.



# Support Our Troops® Newsletter

2007 - #1

*All Together Now!*

**From our  
families,  
to their  
families™**

**Honorable earned  
financial dependability  
and revenue through  
multiple recurring  
revenue sources:**

- Auto tags
- Apparel
- Bumper stickers
- Ribbons
- Decals
- Flags
- Benefits
- Raffles
- Fundraisers
- Adventures
- Magnets
- And much more!

**Support Our Troops,  
Inc., a 501c3 nonprofit  
public charity**

**TIN: 33-1112829**

**mailer@  
SupportOurTroops.org**

**national:  
1-386-767-8882**

## Florida Plate Approved!



On April 30, 2007 the Florida Senate passed the Support Our Troops plate unanimously! On May 2, 2007 the Florida House passed the plate 112-5. Carl Ford, Director of the Florida DMV, has covenanted to have the plate out statewide by 10-1-07. Sen. Carey Baker carried our Bill in the Senate and did a great job. In a project there is

always one man who in the end makes it happen, and all Honor and Glory for this plate in Florida is due Rep. Alan Hays, DDS, Umatilla, Florida, who cleared the path, and made it happen. Chris Dudley, of Southern Strategy, shepherded us through the very complex Florida political process, and was tenacious and professional through it all. Without these men, the troops and their families would not have the benefit of this great new plate. God Bless them.

## Texas Plate Approved!

The Texas Support Our Troops plate has been approved! We hope it will be available by Summer. All Honor and Glory is due Mark Seale who skilled worked through many issues to make this happen for the troops and their families. Like many of us involved in Support Our Troops®, Mark has never been in the military, but acted out of his sense of moral duty to those who are.



## Idaho Plate Approved!

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, Governor C. L. Otter signed the Support Our Troops plate into law. Our Bill was Sponsored by Rep. Bob Nanoni (R), Rep. Mary Shephard (D), and Sen. Lee Heinrich (R). As reported by the Coeur d'Alene Press, the plates will remind us all of our neighbors' commitment, and help our neighbors financially while they are off protecting all of us. Great thanks go to Boise Attorney Roy Eiguren for making this wonderful



thing happen.

## SupportOurTroops.org

Henceforth Support Our Troops® will function principally through the SupportOurTroops.org website. The site has been totally rebuilt and improved. It provides an enhanced interactive member area, better security, a Good News Blogger area, electronic newsletters, membership discounts, and many other great interactive features for our members.

## New Newsletter Format

This will be our last newsletter under this format. As part of our new community website, future newsletters will be both live and downloadable, with a fresh new layout and features. *Only great and better things lie before us!*



## America's Newspapers

**Paper:** Courier-Journal, The (Louisville, KY)  
**Title:** License plate to aid troops' families  
**Date:** December 31, 2006

Some proceeds go

to emergency fund

By Lesley Stedman Weidenbener

lstedman@courier-journal.com

The Courier-Journal

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana will begin offering a **Support Our Troops license plate** on Tuesday and will dedicate some of the proceeds to a fund that supports families of active-duty National Guard and reservists .

Drivers must pay \$35 for the **plate** in addition to the standard registration fee of \$20.75.

Of the additional fee, \$20 will go the Military Family Relief Fund, a new program that aims to provide emergency financial assistance to soldiers' families. The rest will be used for Bureau of Motor Vehicles administrative costs.

The state has no projections for revenue from the **plates**, but Gov. Mitch Daniels said he expects sales to be brisk.

"This is a state of patriots," Daniels said at a news conference last week.

Lawmakers approved creation of the **license plate** earlier this year; it will be available at all **license** branches.

Maj. Gen. Martin Umbarger, adjutant general of the Indiana National Guard, said the state has about 20,000 military reservists and Guard members. About 12,000 of them have been deployed since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The families of many of those soldiers struggle financially, Umbarger said. Often, a family is losing two incomes because a spouse might have to quit a job to stay home with children once a soldier is deployed, he said.

In those cases, families might need to turn to the relief fund if they have an emergency.

"This is one way we can help," Umbarger said.

Indiana now has 68 specialty **license plates**, which is among the highest number in the country. Nearly 314,000 specialty **plates** were sold in 2005, the most recent year for which statistics are available.

The most popular is an environmental **plate** that benefits the state's Heritage Trust fund, which is used to purchase land for conservation.

A full list of available specialty **plates** is available at [www.in.gov/bmv/platesandtitles/plates/index.html](http://www.in.gov/bmv/platesandtitles/plates/index.html)

Reporter Lesley Stedman Weidenbener can be reached at (317) 444-2780.

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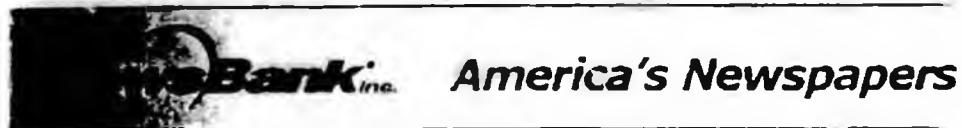
*Author: Lesley Stedman Weidenbener lstedman@courier-journal.com The Courier-Journal*

*Section: News*

*Page: 1B*

*Dateline: Indianapolis, Indiana*

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**Paper:** Chronicle-Tribune (Marion, IN)  
**Title:** STATE AID: GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR MILITARY FAMILIES STRAPPED FOR CASH  
**Date:** April 8, 2007

Indiana National Guard and Selected Reserve families who are experiencing financial difficulties because of deployment can receive grants from the state.

The Military Family Relief Fund, signed into law by Gov. Mitch Daniels is ready to accept applications.

The applicant, who, in most cases, will be the spouse of the service member, must be able to show the service member has been deployed for more than 30 days and financial difficulty is a result of deployment.

The fund is financed through the sale of the "Support Our Troops" and "Hoosier Veteran" license plates. Annual grants of up to \$2,000 are available for items such as food, housing, utilities, medical services and transportation.

Applications are available from county veterans' service officers and [www.in.gov/veteran](http://www.in.gov/veteran).

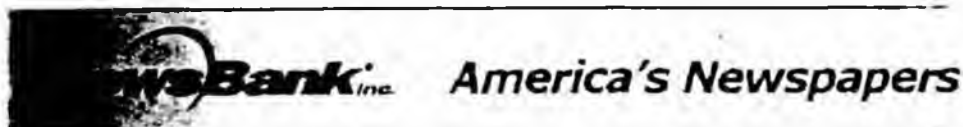
For more information, call State Military Family Relief Fund Coordinator Cheryl Phillips at 1-317-232-3922 or e-mail [cphillip@dva.in.gov](mailto:cphillip@dva.in.gov).

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*Section: Local*

*Page: 3A*

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**Paper:** Coeur d'Alene Press, The (ID)  
**Title:** New plates will help our soldiers  
**Date:** April 8, 2007

It's one thing to show support for our troops by writing letters to the editor, demonstrating honor and respect in soldiers' presence, even expressing our appreciation with a direct word or smile. All of that is good, but now we have something better.

The recently adopted Idaho legislation paving the way for "**Support Our Troops**" license plates offers a simple but effective way to really show our support. In addition to the plates reminding drivers every day about the commitment our troops have made to us, revenue from sale of the plates will go directly to support military families.

The governor's office estimates that the \$35 license plate fee will generate upward of \$100,000 a year for Idaho troops and their families, with money being handled by the nonprofit organization **Support Our Troops, Inc.**

"**Support Our Troops**" plates will resemble the current red, white and blue plates but feature silhouettes of a soldier and a child in front of a U.S. flag. Plates will be available next January.

We commend the legislative trio who helped make Idaho the 46th state offering these specialty plates. Two of them, Rep. Bob Nonini, R-Coeur d'Alene, and Rep. Mary Lou Shepherd, D-Wallace, are North Idahoans. The third is Sen. Lee Heinrich, a Cascade Republican. Together, these legislators from both chambers and opposing parties put the good of soldiers and their families above and beyond any political differences or personal opinions of the war effort. On behalf of the thousands of veterans and their families in our readership area, we thank all three from the bottom of our hearts.

Now it's up to the rest of us to make the plate program successful. We'll remind you at the beginning of the year that the license plates are available, and we'll encourage you to make the switch and tell you how.

Finally, our thanks go to **Support Our Troops, Inc.** On their Web site, [www.supportthem.com](http://www.supportthem.com), organizers say they were founded as a permanent national nonprofit by a group of civilians wishing to assist soldiers' survivors and families. That support comes in the form of education, medical, home needs, emergency transportation and more.

No matter how you feel about the war, please, do what you can to help the families of those so bravely serving our country. Purchasing a specialty license plate next year is one great way to show that support.

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## America's Newspapers

**Paper:** Spokesman-Review, The (Spokane, WA)  
**Title:** Pro-troops license plate approved  
**Date:** March 23, 2007

Idaho drivers could buy "Support Our Troops" specialty license plates under a bill passed by the House on Thursday.

Money from the \$35 plates, available in 2008, would help fund Support Our Troops Inc., a nonprofit organization that supports military families. The funds would provide emergency food, shelter and medical assistance, said Rep. Bob Nonini, R-Coeur d'Alene.

The House voted 61-4 to pass the bill, which requires Gov. Butch Otter's signature to become law.

The new plate would resemble the standard red, white and blue Idaho plate, but would feature silhouettes of a soldier and a child in front of a U.S. flag on the left side.

Idaho already offers dozens of plate options that support causes from the Boy Scouts of America to Idaho Capitol renovation. Forty-five states have already created "Support Our Troops" plates, and the remaining five are expected to authorize them this year, according to the statement of purpose for the measure, Senate Bill 1131.

Rep. Mary Lou Shepherd, D-Wallace, said lawmakers should support the plate "no matter how we stand on the war issue." While Shepherd could "already hear the sighs" of legislators when discussing a new plate, she said it "should sell well throughout the state."

Chaired in Idaho by Debbie Field, head of Otter's Office of Drug Policy, the troops organization hopes to raise \$75,000 to \$100,000 yearly through sales of plates and other items, Nonini said. He's confident it will surpass minimum selling requirements and become a permanent plate, he said.

Rep. Jim Clark, R-Hayden Lake, opposed the bill, saying he's always voted against new plates. He contended that the state doesn't control where money generated by plate sales winds up.

Clark also objected because nonmilitary drivers cannot buy other Idaho military plates, but "draft dodgers" and war objectors could purchase "Support Our Troops" plates.

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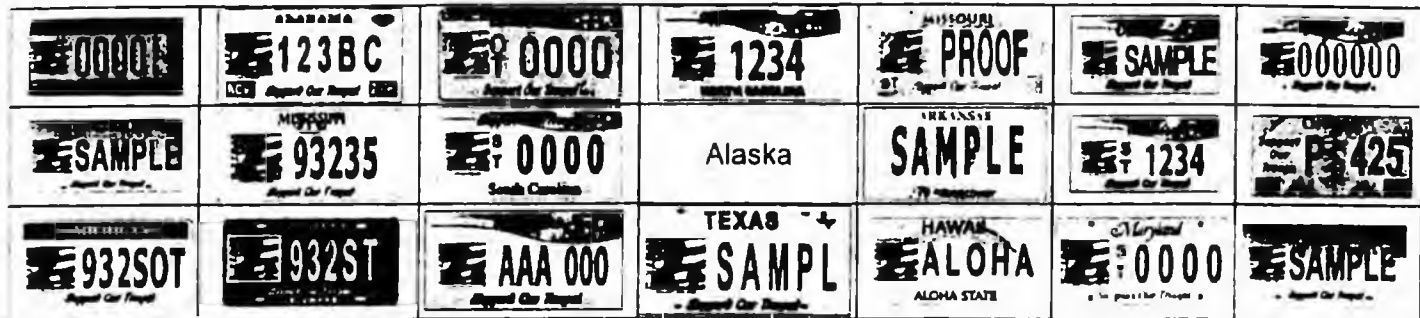
*Author: Parker Howell Staff writer  
Page: 1B  
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OVERVIEW



**They Support Us -- *Let's Support Them!***<sup>™</sup>



- from our families to their families -

This action brings the **Support Our Troops** license plate to Alaska, sponsored by Support Our Troops®. SOT® will soon have caused the issuance of Official **Support Our Troops** plates in some 40 states, with around 20 being completed in 2006 (many unanimously by their Legislatures), and the necessities in place for issuance in about 16 more in 2007, including: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

Founded by civilians as a concrete statement of thanks to the troops for their service, Support Our Troops® is a 501(c)(3) national public-benefit charity group dedicated to assisting the troops and their families in the century to come. SOT is the embodiment of the moral obligation of those of us who do not serve, to those who do. It is civilians voluntarily offering what is morally owed. The purpose of SOT is to facilitate public displays of support for America's troops through various means, and to raise money to *actually* help them by financially bolstering their families post September 11, 2001. SOT provides simple means through which America's families can protect the integrity of their troops' families, while the troops are off protecting all of our families -- whether in a peacekeeping mission, a war, or a hurricane, flood, or other disaster. SOT's business model is to create recurring revenue streams so that its promises to the families can be dependable.

To date, Support Our Troops holds the registered trademark Support Our Troops® at the federal level and in 44 states. This enables SOT to focus on the troops' families revenue from manufacture and licensing of apparel, decorative magnets, stickers, pins, jewelry, accessories, charitable fundraising, special events, and the like. SOT expects that by the end of 2008 all of its various activities will annually produce about \$15-\$20 million in non-profit revenue nationwide for the troops and their families.

The Honorable Sonny Montgomery, "the soldier's soldier", and the author of the renowned Montgomery G.I. Bill, when joining the Support Our Troops Board of Advisors, wrote "Support Our Troops has a truly bold vision of good things planned for our troops and their families over the next century, and I wholeheartedly endorse these efforts and encourage others to work with [them] as well. This is a civilian organization involved in a major effort to forever put the civilians of our great nation behind their troops. I think it is a healthy thing for civilian run organizations to be openly behind their troops, because such an effort cannot be accomplished by government agencies, veteran groups or even the military itself with the same efficiency, responsiveness, and enthusiasm as a private organization can provide. Civilians are best suited to motivating other civilians for the sake of our troops and veterans. Support Our Troops, Inc., is well-organized, includes veterans in its management, and I am well acquainted with the trustworthiness of people in it."

SOT is one of the safest national charities, with checks and balances in place that include among others: annual supervision by each of about 35 state Attorneys General and Auditors General across America; independent accounting firm dischargeable only by whole Board of Directors; annual reporting and review in each of about 35 states on Form 990; IRS-approved Conflict of Interest Policy; certain legal matters handled by Arnold & Porter and Baker & McKenzie.

**They Support Us – Let's Support Them!™**



## OVERVIEW

*from our families to their families*

### **Who Started SOT® and Why.**

*The enemy may compel a soldier to leave his family, but they will not steal his family's future.* Support Our Troops® was founded by civilians as a concrete statement of thanks to the troops for their service in the century to come. Support Our Troops® is a nonpartisan, nonpolitical, patriotic family organization aimed at protecting the integrity of the troops and their families. SOT® is a 501(c)(3) public purpose national nonprofit dedicated to permanently assisting the troops and their families after September 11, 2001. It is the embodiment of the moral obligation of those who do not serve, to those who do -- voluntarily offering what is morally owed. It is our families stepping up to watch out for the families of the troops who are off protecting all our families. We are average folks banded together to help our neighbors who are protecting all of us. We do for those who do for us.

### **General Montgomery.**

The Honorable Sonny Montgomery, "the soldier's soldier", the veteran's veteran, and the author of the renowned Montgomery G.I. Bill, was the seminal member of the Support Our Troops Board of Advisors. Upon joining, he wrote, "Support Our Troops has a truly bold vision of good things planned for our troops and their families over the next century, and I wholeheartedly endorse these efforts and encourage others to work with you and the board as well. This is a civilian organization involved in a major effort to forever put the civilians of our great nation behind their troops. I think it is a healthy thing for civilian run organizations to be openly behind their troops, because such an effort cannot be accomplished by government agencies, veteran groups or even the military itself with the same efficiency, responsiveness, and enthusiasm as a private organization can provide. Civilians are best suited to motivating other civilians for the sake of our troops and veterans. Support Our Troops, Inc., is well-organized, includes veterans in its management, and I am well acquainted with the trustworthiness of people in it."

### **Safety**

As a nation-wide charity, checks and balances in place including among others: strictly independent accounting, dischargeable only by full Board of Directors, and the principal of which is a veteran); annual reporting and review in each of 35 states on Form 990; IRS Conflict of Interest Policy; subject annual audit by each of over 35 state Attorney Generals or Auditor Generals; legal matters handled by Arnold & Porter, Baker & McKenzie, Holland & Knight.



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### **It's All About Family.**

Support Our Troops, Inc. is engaged in an immense project for our troops and their families. In short, we are going to help keep our troops' families intact while their parent(s) are engaged in protecting our families, whether it is a peacekeeping mission, a war, or hurricane, flood, or disaster. We want to help pay for education, medical, home needs, emergency transportation, and the like -- the kinds of things that dad or mom could do if they were home. It is not about "war". It is not about "military." It is about family. All of SOT's imagery is built around a parent and child, around family. Positive. Happy. Fun. We are fortunate to have some of Disney's® artist helping us on their personal time.

### **From Our Families to Their Families.**

All of our programs are designed to enable average American families to take care of America's troops' families. This is one of the highest of moral obligations -- bolstering the families of those who are protecting our families. All of our programs both enable people to publicly state their support for their troops, while producing millions annually in *patriotic private money* to bolster the troops and families who are sacrificing to protect all of us. We provide simple direct means by which our families can look out for their families.

### **The Support Our Troops License Plate Program.**

A large component of our program is causing the issuance of official DMV-issued *Support Our Troops!* license plates by the 50 states. Many Legislatures have approved the plate for us unanimously. These plates enable Americans to display their appreciation for our brave men and women and to make a significant annually recurring financial donation to assist their families through the purchase of the plate.

### **Subsidiaries.**

We have approximately 24 subsidiary charities around the US, all bearing the SUPPORT OUR TROOPS® name and all granted registration as an authorized charity with their state Attorneys General and Secretaries of State. Because we handle state license plate revenue, and in some states are even required to collect motor vehicle license plate revenue for the state and remit it to them, we are likely the most heavily monitored and therefore safest charity in America. Also, a number of states elected officials hold positions on their state's Board of Directors and act as officers of the corporation, or on the Board of Advisors. We handle as much of the administration as possible out of the central office to keep overhead down and maximize the benefits that end up with the troops' families.

### **Virtual Chapter for Each State.**



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Modern habits indicate that those interested in working with Support Our Troops® are best served through an continuous internet meeting place rather than physical meeting places. Our goal is to maximize the amount of money that is raised and passed on to the beneficiaries, not build brick and mortar. This approach removes the travel distances for members of a statewide chapter, removes the overhead cost, is faster, and allows fuller, faster participation for everyone. We want to avoid fragmentation and duplication of administration which draws off funds that could go to the beneficiaries. Therefore using the modern internet we are creating virtual chapters in which members of each state chapter primarily interact through their state website page. Setting up physical meeting places and schedules would require facilities and coordination which would needlessly consume money. Each chapter would require internal operating funds which would take money from beneficiaries. Eventually annual meetings of all chapters would be suggested, which would take more funds. The costs would exceed the beneficial services physical meeting of local chapters could perform.

### **Internet Portal Site and the Association.**

Between February and April 2007 the website is being completely rebuilt into an interactive community portal site using an entirely different operating system. Generally stated, the Association site will be part of existing supportthem.com site. Until the rebuild is completed the site may be best viewed by logging on through [www.SupportThem.com/frontpage](http://www.SupportThem.com/frontpage). The Association area will open from the existing "Join the Support Our Troops Association" page on the front page. On each existing state page matters specific and germane to that state and cities therein will be posted on an Association area that is added to the bottom of the state page. There will be a button they can click that allows them to add an event or additional group. We will be acquiring volunteer state page monitors and editors, just like Wikipedia.com does. These are essential to keeping out spammers. Among other things, members will be able to:

- Post a rally
- Post good news
- Post a fundraiser
- Post a special project which needs assistance.
- Post information about news coverage and whether fair or not.
- Post a good email people might want to clip and forward
- Make general patriotic postings
- Coverage of good press / bad press coverage of our troops. i.e., is your local media treating the troops fairly?
- Trouble flying your flag? (news and where to write when people are harassed for flying the flag)
- Trouble showing your patriotism? (news and where to write when people are harassed for wearing a shirt at school, etc.)



## OVERVIEW

Links to services that enable people to send emails to the troops

Create user groups like Yahoo® user groups.

Ability to specify membership categories like "VMI", "Blue Star" and the like so that people that have a common connection can then communicate with their peers for various reasons and specific projects.

Etc.

### **The Seal of Assurance Program.**

Confusion abounds. Information is isolated and not findable. Many people call us for information about legitimate charities. There is great uncertainty and confusion about charities for the troops. Yellow ribbons show support, but who is getting the money? People are very uncertain as to which are legitimate and which are not. Therefore a great deal of money is lost because people "almost give" due to fear of being conned. While a few unknown sites collate small limited lists, none examine a charity against a list of objective criteria and render a decision as to whether it is trustworthy and reasonably benefits the troops.

Therefore Support Our Troops® holds the role as accreditor for troop-related charities and as they are approved will authorize their use of the Seal of Assurance™. The fee is \$1 a year. No one had thought of this before. No one had done it. So SOT did.



The Support Our Troops® Seal of Assurance™ is intended to assist troop-related charities and organizations in eliminating donor uncertainty by examining and accrediting all troop-related charities and organizations in regard to whether they appropriately benefit the troops and/or their families. Another aspect of Seal of Assurance™ program is designed to help stop parasites who would profit off the backs of our troops with products that do nothing financially for the troops. This program employs a mark (like the UL® seal or the Good Housekeeping seal) on goods which assures people that they are legitimately licensed and an appropriate amount of the royalties are going to the troops and their families.

### **Charity Index**

Most states are printing our web address on the *Support Our Troops!* license plates. We are requiring it on licensed products. Participants in the Seal of Assurance™ are required to link to an automatic participant verifier page on our website. Therefore the SOT website will have a great deal of traffic and will be perceived as "official." We are therefore able to provide another badly needed and highly useful service: a consolidated living list of all of the charities and organizations anywhere that do anything that benefits the active duty troops and/or their families. There will also be a



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warning list as to identified bad ones, phishing sites, and the like. This data base is being structured so that charities in each state will be listed on that state's Association area of the site. When people log on, they can see what the group is doing, where they are located, how to contact them what they need or offer. People can link up and help each other. Churches or groups can post things they need for packages. People who want to help assemble packages or otherwise do something can find places to do so. Users will be able to search or sort the database to find the exact thing charity in which they are interested. People will be able to log on with their user name and password (free entry level) and add a charity, organization, or event which benefits the troops or their families. To the left of each will be a cell into which we will place the Seal of Assurance™ if they participate in that program.

### **Business Model.**

The business model of Support Our Troops® is to create recurring revenue streams. We have launched a nationwide program of *Support Our Troops!* license plates to enable people to show their support for and make a recurring contribution to bolster the families of those protect all of us. The name has been branded which allows for creation of many recurring revenue streams from products and services using it. The model is to *not* create a hat-in-hand charity. The goal is to create a company with an image that is vigorous and cool for kids and products that are sought after and in which people care to be routinely seen whether or not we are at conflict. The goal is to build a charity that endures for a hundred years, which has a marketable national identity, and has multiple revenue sources for stability. We are building for permanency and long term health. When we look a parent in the eye and tell them their kid is going to college, both they and we will know our word is good.

### **Local Organization**

Our first effort in each state is to cause the plates to be issued. While doing so we begin putting local organization infrastructure in place so that local people have a means by which to get involved and run this at the local level. In preparation for, or during that process, we make good local connections and encounter people and groups who earnestly want to help the troops and are glad to find Support Our Troops® as a trustworthy means through which they can do so. Once the plate is issued we start radio and TV PSAs and other advertising. This usually attracts more people who have been looking for something like this. So along the way we set up two participation vehicles.

Board of Advisors. Support Our Troops, Inc. establishes a Board of Advisors for the state. This approach enables notable and connected persons to participate with their peers in an orderly manner, present themselves to the public with a recognized capacity when such is necessary, yet remain free of the



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responsibility and liability of being a corporate director. Some local boards now have legislators, lobbyists, and corporate executives on them. There is not a fixed number of positions for the Board of Advisors. The trick will be for each state's locals to eventually blend both political figures, top people from the top local businesses, local major sports figures, and the like together onto the Board. Since the Board of Advisors is not a corporate directorship with all of the bother about liability and control, as many top people as wish can freely participate. The Board could have 10 members, it could have 60. It will evolve to where they decide on and throw their weight behind a local fundraising event, such as a golf tournament, fishing tournament, sporting clay tournament, or the like. And then the general public members of the Support Our Troops Association pitch in to handle the organization and execution work.

Association. To involve the general public, SOT® formed the Americans Support Our Troops Association, Inc. The All-American entry level is free. People are members of their state chapter of the Association. This will function as a virtual community through the SOT open architecture website, with local people able to post bulletins and notices about local events, resources, and the like on their state page. This website feature should be fully active by 12-31-06. It is intended to be a single-source reference point and clearinghouse for local information for local active duty troops, local vet groups, local charities, and information efforts to help the troops such as putting packages together to send them and the like. There is a free entry level membership, and several higher levels, as well as the ability for a club (such as a VSO, a Post, Rotary, etc) to have an affiliate membership in the Association as a club to show support, and the ability for a business to have a corporate membership.

Having caused the issuance of the same plate in so many states makes Support Our Troops® distinct. The local Boards can use that to interconnect SOT with as many local companies, sponsors, and events as they can think of to raise money for the troops and their families.

### **Veterans Groups (VSOs)**

We are using the brand name Support Our Troops® as an open source conduit to facilitate as much as we can for all other groups. Key is that we are working very closely and hard to draw attention to and build the membership of VSOs, (Veterans Service Organizations). One of the key things Support Our Troops® wants to do is help promote each state's VSOs to the public and the returning troops, draw their attention to the VSOs, and help make the public and recently returned servicemen and servicewomen aware of what they can find with each organization. Traffic through our website is now growing rapidly. We are using that to promote and call attention to



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VSOs, tell visitors briefly what each VSO can offer them, and send them along to the local VSOs through links to their sites or contact information. This is part of our mission and there is of course no charge for such a thing. We figure the price has already been paid. The object is to use the internet to its full potential by using our website to drive traffic, and hopefully members, to each state's VSOs.

Support Our Troops® is also knitting itself in with all of the VSOs in order to be of benefit to them. We hold joint fundraising events with different posts. We refer returning soldiers to them to enable them to talk to someone who has been there. We organize special events, such as Patriot Rides, to call attention to both troops and veterans. While Support Our Troops is lead by people who have not served, it is filled at the national and state levels with veterans in all management and operational levels. SOT can be a real asset and good partner and earnestly seeks to develop very close productive ties with the VSOs in each state for mutual enjoyment and benefit.

### **The Support Our Troops Association**

SOT has founded the Americans Support Our Troops Association in order to provide a healthy direct connection between American civilians and their troops. The entry level membership is free, and there are several levels of paying memberships. Between February and April 2007 the website is being completely rebuilt into an interactive community portal site in which Members will be able to log on with their user name and password, and post notices on their state page about events that are happening for the troops, fundraisers, local charities, groups or churches that are putting together packages for the troops and what is needed and where to contact people locally. They will be able to assemble into subgroups and set up areas in which to interact to work on special projects. It will be an immensely useful single source portal for local interaction. On our website each state will have a page on which people can list rallies, events, and fundraisers, or provide information about organizations that troop's families can look to for assistance. Each state's web page will also have lists of all of the VSOs in the state, and all state agencies which help the troops and veterans.

The generally-stated purposes of ASOTA are to facilitate public displays of support for America's troops and to raise money to bolster the troops and the families of troops sacrificing to protect America after September 11, 2001, and ASOTA is established to facilitate that end. The objectives of ASOTA are to enable Americans to do the following for their troops and their families and survivors:

- Bolster them.
- Distribute useful news and information among themselves.
- Organize and facilitate approved supportive rallies and events.
- Spread the word about the Support Our Troops Seal of Assurance™ program.
- Spread the word about rallies.



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- Organize and facilitate approved fundraisers for Support Our Troops, Inc. (SOT).
- Pursue approved positive media support and positive coverage for SOT, the troops, and their families.
- Facilitate public displays of patriotism.
- Encourage patriotism in others by example.
- Facilitate people's gathering and sharing their support and enthusiasm.
- Facilitate charitable fundraising through a Support Our Troops affinity credit card program.
- Exchange information about news coverage.
- Exchange supportive email messages.
- Coordinate supportive activities for the troop's families.

### **National Board of Advisors**

In addition to the Board of Advisors in each state, SOT has a national Board of Advisors for national level figures. Every successful great project has Mentors who provide invaluable guidance, have charted similar courses before, know how to avoid the shoals, where lies the fairest wind, and which ships are friendly. These mentors are the people who are able to make good things happen quickly. From Homers' Odyssey in antiquity to the present, these keystone individuals are those who provide wise advice, build bridges, locate funding, make connections and open doors to make great things happen for good causes. The Support Our Troops National Board of Advisors comprises just such magnanimous individuals. They offer their wisdom to assist the greater good, and are shepherding this project to success for the benefit of America's troops and their families. The directors of Support Our Troops are fortunate enough to benefit from the wisdom, counsel and assistance of these key advisors. The Board is being grown with high profile people from various industry categories, including Executive Members, Business Members, Sports Members, Military Members, Entertainment Industry Members, and so forth. The Board's first member was Sonny Montgomery, author of the G.I. Bill. In fact, it is actually named The Montgomery G.I. Bill. We do not anticipate that the Board of Advisors is going to tie itself up with frequent meetings and formalities. The principal purpose of the Advisors is to provide strategic business planning advice and occasionally help open a door or make a connection when Support Our Troops works to put together a rock concert, golf tournament, and other event to benefit the troops and their families. Referrals of such people for this Board will be greatly appreciated.