

# **BRING THE GUARD HOME! IT'S THE LAW. STARTING A CAMPAIGN IN YOUR STATE**

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Bring the Guard Home! It's the Law is a national movement of state campaigns to end the unlawful overseas deployment of our National Guard. There are active campaigns in over 20 states working with state legislators to pass laws that will help keep our National Guard units from being sent to Iraq, and prevent future deployments that are not legal. With this legislation, the states can begin to reassert their historic national defense responsibilities and to honor the Constitution's genius for distributing power over issues of war and peace. This campaign can also help to bring an end to an occupation that has caused incredible suffering and death for untold numbers of innocent people.

## **The Legal Basis**

The original authority for the deployment of the National Guard to Iraq was the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) passed by Congress in 2002. The 2002 AUMF limited authorized military action to two purposes: 1) to force Iraq to comply with then extant U.N. Security Council resolutions; and 2) to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq.

Now that Saddam Hussein has been removed from power, and we know that Iraq does not have any weapons of mass destruction, the original mission has been completed and the 2002 AUMF is no longer in force. President Bush ignored the expiration of the 2002 AUMF much in the same way that he ignored the law in other essential national security areas. The objective truth is that today there is no longer any legal basis for sending the National Guard to Iraq. Unless Congress authorizes a new mission in Iraq, thereby providing the president with the legal authority to continue operations in that country, no state government should release their Guard units for deployment to Iraq. Thus the tag-line of this campaign, "It's the Law."

The ongoing, unlawful deployment of National Guard units to Iraq is the most pressing, but not the only, issue facing the states in fulfilling their responsibilities to members of their state Guard. The abuse of the Guard in Iraq, if unchecked, could set a dangerous precedent for the use of National Guard units in other, future, wars of choice. For this reason, many state Bring the Guard Home! campaigns are working not only to pass legislation opposing Guard deployments to Iraq, but also to amend state statutes so as to make sure that what happened in Iraq doesn't happen again.

For a more detailed explanation of the legal issues involved, please check out the resources located at <http://www.bringtheguardhome.org/resources>

## **How can you begin a campaign in your state?**

### **Recruiting other activists/activist groups to join you.**

It is helpful to have others who are willing to work with you on this campaign in your state. So, one of the first things you can do is to think about other activists/activist groups who might be interested in working with you on this campaign. Talk to them and find out who would be willing to be on the team. You may think about activist friends who would be

interested in working with you on the campaign, or a peace or other social action group. Is there a peace group in your community? Is there a large peace group in your state that has contacts with peace groups around the state?

Keep in mind that many national organizations have endorsed this campaign, and that most of these have chapters and/or activist contacts in your state. Chances are good that the chapters of these organizations will be interested in getting involved. For a current list of these national organizations, see <http://www.bringtheguardhome.org/about>

Additionally, the "Bring the Guard Home! It's the Law." campaign has an Outreach Committee which maintains a growing list of individuals who have expressed interest in this effort. Please let us know if you would like a list of the interested individuals in your state.

### **Identify and contact potential supporters in the state legislature.**

Your next step is to identify state legislators who might be supportive and to set up meetings to talk to them. We can provide you with samples of legislation being used by other states to share with potential legislative sponsors, as well as a 30 page legal memo explaining the issues involved; both of these are available at <http://www.bringtheguardhome.org/resources>

We can also share samples of agendas and talking points that other groups have used in meeting with legislators, give you tips on what to look out for, and, if you have identified a legislator who is considering sponsorship, put them in touch with legislators in other states who are already on board.

### **Public Education**

It is important to get the general public educated and behind this effort so that they will contact their state legislators and ask them to introduce and/or support these efforts.

There are flyers and petitions already developed that you can adapt and use in your state efforts. There are sample letters to the editor, ideas for press conferences, ideas for town hall meetings, and other things you can do to raise public awareness of this campaign.

Starting with a petition drive can be a good first step. Legislators will be more likely to act if they know they have the support of their constituents, and petitions are a good way to show support. If you do a petition drive, make sure people print their names legibly. Some people think they must sign a petition, but this is not a ballot measure initiative where their signatures are necessary. It is most important that organizers can read a name. For more tips on petitioning and sample petitions that have been used in state campaigns see <http://www.bringtheguardhome.org/resources> .

### **Support for you in developing this campaign**

The national coordinator, Ben Manski, will talk with you about specific problems and questions regarding the campaign in your state. There is a strong nationwide group with a conference call every two weeks to provide support to the state campaigns. There is also an email listserv to provide support as we all work together to push this effort forward. For information on all of these, please connect with Ben at [Contact@BringtheGuardHome.org](mailto:Contact@BringtheGuardHome.org) or 608 257 1606.