

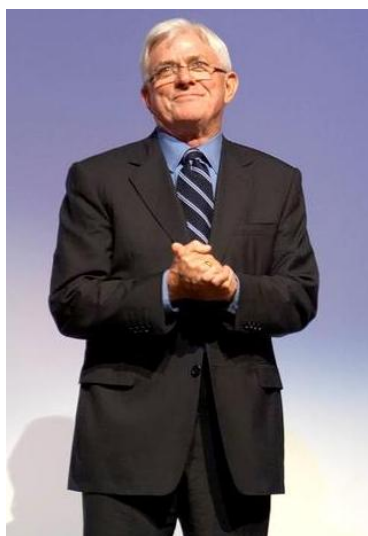
# *Military Families* **SPEAK OUT**

**Support our troops,  
bring them home now,  
and take care of them  
when they get here.**

May/June, 2015

## **MFSO Steering Committee REPORT**

The Steering Committee is pleased to announce that renowned talk show host and long standing activist Phil Donahue will host the MFSO round table at Left Forum.



## **Betrayed by our government:**

**Featuring  
Matthew Hoh,  
Ray McGovern,  
Kevin & Joyce  
Lucey and Cathy  
Smith**

**When: Saturday, May 30, 12:00 pm - 1:50 pm**  
**John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City**  
**University of New York, NYC**  
**Where: Room L.63**  
**Registration: 212-817-2002**

After almost a year of intense planning, MFSO will be presenting a spectacular panel at this year's Left Forum in New York City. The MFSO panel will be moderated by award-winning documentarian and television host Phil Donahue.

Inspired by the presence of about 4,000 attendees at last year's Left Forum, Brooklyn chapter leader Ann Fawcett Ambia, Mary Hladky (MO), and Pat Alviso (CA) began putting together a dynamic and impressive group of panelists, which will include long-time MFSO members Cathy Smith (MFSO

MO), Kevin and Joyce Lucey (MFSO Boston), Matthew Hoh (Iraq Veterans Against the War), and Ray McGovern (Veterans for Peace).

Cathy Smith and Kevin and Joyce Lucey will share their compelling stories of how they lost their sons after they returned from Iraq and discuss how they currently wage their own battles to make sure these unjust wars end now as well as the policies that created them.

The story of Cathy Smith's son, Tomas Young, was followed by thousands in the award-winning documentary **Body of War**.

The Luceys have been telling their story about their son, USMC Reservist Jeffrey Michael Lucey, who returned from Iraq suffering from the hidden wounds of war. He did not receive the help he needed and died by suicide at the age of 23. His story is told in the book **The Wounds Within**.

Providing a powerful discussion on the failed US policy in Iraq and Afghanistan and the escalation of the war in Syria and other parts of the Middle East are the highly regarded Matthew Hoh and Ray McGovern, Marine Corps Veteran Matthew Hoh (IVAW) resigned from his post in the State Department and Pentagon in protest over the failed US policy in Afghanistan. Long-time Veterans for Peace leader Ray McGovern is a former Army infantry intelligence officer and 27-year CIA analyst, who was equally incensed by the Army's generals sending our troops on a fool's errand.

After a year of planning and coordinating, our hard work is beginning to pay off. MFSO is receiving great enthusiasm in numerous inquiries about our panel. We hope you will join us and participate in the Q&A by telling YOUR story. Ed Garza (MFSO CA) will be taping interviews. Come by the MFSO

table, hosted all weekend by Marcia Westbrook (MFSO W. VA), Sabrina Gaona, and Wanda Walker (MFSO CA), for a visit and pick up a new MFSO t-shirt. Join us Saturday night for a mixer and give your input on our new mission statement.

If you can't come to NYC, follow us on MFSO's Facebook page, Twitter, and, of course, Like, Comment, and Share.

Every one of you has a story to tell and a role to play in ending these wars and the policies that continue to threaten the lives of our families and millions of innocent civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan, and now Syria.

If you have any questions, call or email us at [mfso@mfso.org](mailto:mfso@mfso.org).  
by Pat Alviso, MFSO-OC



MFSO member, Marcia Westbrook, at a Memorial Day, 2015 event in Williamstown, WVA

## The MFSO Mission Statement

The mission of Military Families Speak Out is to advocate for all U.S. troops to leave Iraq and Afghanistan now and to speak out against unjust military interventions. MFSO supports policies that utilize diplomacy over military force. We support the troops and work hard to ensure that their needs are met while deployed and when they return home.

## Here are some ways you can help:

- Do outreach to bring in new members, especially those whose loved ones are active duty. Form a new chapter, no matter how small or large. Let us know about your chapter: location, contact person e-mail and phone, activities.
- Work on on-going MFSO efforts – calls or meetings with members of Congress, getting signatures on petitions, forums or speak-outs, film-showings, working as part of a coalition in your area, etc. The Steering Committee can provide support for you. Contact Pat Alviso at [mfso@mfso.org](mailto:mfso@mfso.org).
- Participate in a local vigil against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Or, start your own weekly or monthly vigil. Find a busy corner, or a spot with some symbolism (a congressional office, a Federal building, any high traffic area). Develop a list of contacts at your local press so you can spread the word about your vigil.
- Help raise money for on-going MFSO work. Checks can be written to Military Families Speak Out or make an online donation on our website at [mfso.org](http://mfso.org). Everyone who contributes will receive a lovely thank you card and gifts from our fund-raising committee.

**Teaneck Peace Vigil to hold 468<sup>th</sup> consecutive vigil at the National Guard Armory in Teaneck, NJ**

**Wednesday, August 19, from 4-5:00 pm**

**Demand an end to U.S. participation and funding of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan!**

**Take care of our troops, veterans, and their families.**

**Co-sponsored by MFSO Bergen County and Veterans For Peace, Chapter 21 NJ**

## **MFSO members at *Spring Rising* in Washington, D.C. in March**

**“Don’t Take the Bait!  
Bring our Troops Home Now!”**

A group of MFSO members and supporters traveled from different parts of the country to take part in the “Spring Rising Antiwar Intervention in D.C.” Billed as “An End to Endless Wars”, the three day conference addressed the issues regarding the continuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Veterans for Peace also had a large contingent of members. Both of our groups were a large presence during the workshops and the protest march through the D.C. area. The CA group included Pat Alviso and Jeff Merrick from Long Beach, Dede Miller from Bellflower, Ed Garza from Orange County, Sabrina Gaona and Wanda Walker from Hawaiian Gardens, Michael McPherson, Mary Hladky, and Casey Stine Metz came from MO., Kevin Lucey from MA., Marsha Westbrook and Wendy Tucker hailed from WV and Ann Fawcett Ambia from New York. Speakers include Cindy Sheehan, David Swanson and Matthew Hoh.



A panel moderated by Jeff Merrick included Kevin Lucey, father of a veteran who committed suicide, discussed the hardships and problems leading up to his son’s death, Michael McPherson, VFP Executive Director, talked about problems his son, a veteran, had with The VA after his discharge, Matthew Hoh, former USMC captain who resigned his post in protest, discussed failed policy in Afghanistan and Maggie Martin who talked about her experience in the military in Afghanistan and how she befriended local civilians.

It was a highly charged panel and many tears were shed as we listened to the hardships and trials they went through and are experiencing as a result of their military work in service to our country.



MFSO members  
Ann Ambia (NY)  
and Sabrina Gaona  
(CA)

MFSO members walked the “Halls of Congress” and knocked on doors and requested to talk to Congress persons. We were able to talk/discuss issues with 12 congressional members’ staff. We discussed MFSO, our mission, our work and our concerns. Our subjects focused on the Authorization for Force in the Middle East, bringing the troops home, “Don’t Take the Bait”, and MFSO mission statements.



MFSO (WV)  
members, Marcia  
Westbrook, and  
Wendy Tucker  
visiting Rep. Alex  
Mooney

Sabrina and Wanda making a point with a legislative aide about the violence close to our borders



MFSO members  
meeting with their  
representative from  
CA. Jeff Merrick,  
Pat Alviso, Sabrina  
Gaona, Rep. Linda  
Sanchez, Wanda  
Walker and Ed  
Garza

MFSO standing with legislative aide to Rep. Linda Sanchez in support of a bill she presented that would protect deployed troops from poor credit reports





Continued from page 2

We marched on Saturday. MFSO and VFP had banners and signs and we carried them prominently throughout the parade. Many groups also had signs and banners of their organizations. The march started in front of the White House where speeches were given. Cindy Sheehan, Matthew Hoh, David Swanson and others gave speeches. Ed Garza gave a short speech on MFSO and helped hyped up the crowd in preparation for the march. MFSO was continuously mentioned during speeches and announcements as we marched through the streets. The march ended in front of the Capitol where we heard some more speeches and then trudged back to our hotel.

by Ed Garza, MFSO – Orange County, CA

### **MFSO of today - inspired by the great tradition of activism of MFSO and GSFSO members in the past.**



An enduring memory from my time with MFSO is "Operation House Call", when we organized a 6 week daily vigil outside of the Cannon House Office Building in 2006, each day adding boots and shoes representing the mounting American and Iraqi casualties. I am filled with pride over the work I did with these brave folks. I am also filled with rage and grief at the toll these wars took, and continue to take here and in the countries we destroyed.

by Nikki Morse, former director of MFSO

**Support Our Troops!  
Bring Them Home Now!  
Take Care of Them When They Get Home!**

## **Please Donate to MFSO.**

**If you believe in our efforts, we need your help. Please support us by donating today.**

MFSO needs your help in our continued national work. We cannot forget that American troops are still risking their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq, with the very real possibility that our government will add even more "boots on the ground".

Last August, MFSO leadership attended a high level meeting at the White House with another visit likely in the very near future. In March, we were in Washington DC for *Spring Uprising*, lobbying congress about our nation's wars of aggression. We presented a distinguished conference panel, and the following day rallied with our partners, Veterans for Peace and Iraq Veterans Against the War, in a march from the White House to the Capitol protesting endless war.

**You are vital to our continued work.  
Please donate today.**

Follow us on Facebook – check out our White House and Protest photos today. Join us and over 4,000 others at the Left Forum and watch for live postings from the MFSO NYC event with Phil Donahue.

To donate by check: Please make your check out to MFSO and send to:

Military Families Speak Out  
1716 Clark Ave PMB 122, Long Beach, CA 90815  
Online donations can be made by going to:  
<http://www.militaryfamiliespeakout.com/donate-to-mfso/>



If you have a loved one serving in the military, please join MFSO.

Write to: [mfso-oc@earthlink.net](mailto:mfso-oc@earthlink.net)