



For Immediate Release
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**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN'S OFFICE BRIEFS ILLINOIS
GUARD ON STATE, FEDERAL RIGHTS AND BENEFITS**

Program to Prepare Largest Deployment of Illinois Troops Since WWII

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan has developed a series of initiatives designed to support military service members, veterans and their families as 2,700 members of the 33rd Brigade Combat Team prepare to leave Illinois for Afghanistan in the largest overseas deployment of Illinois troops since World War II.

Madigan's Veterans Right Bureau is currently holding informational seminars for the Brigade's service members and their families preparing for deployment. The seminars are designed to create greater awareness about state and federal benefits and protections, including re-employment rights, monetary benefits for survivors and support resources available to service members and their families before, during and after deployment. In addition to the briefings, the Attorney General's office reminds all service members, veterans and their families to contact the Attorney General's Veterans Rights Hotline (1-800-382-3000) for further assistance.

"As Illinois service members prepare to deploy, it's important that they are aware of the resources available to them and their families while they support our state and country's interests," said Madigan. "It's equally important that they understand these services don't end with their deployment and that as veterans, they are entitled to benefits and further protections in recognition of their service to our nation."

Madigan also urged Illinois residents to show their support for the troops by signing personalized "Wishing You A Safe Return" cards made available this weekend at the **Du Quoin State Fair**. More than 300 cards of thanks were signed by Illinoisans who visited Attorney General Madigan's tent at the State Fair in Springfield earlier this month. Working with the Illinois United Service Organization (USO), the Attorney General's office will deliver the cards to the troops as they prepare for deployment.

"These cards are a simple but heartfelt gesture that tells our troops how much we value and honor their service as they defend our country overseas," Madigan said. "We wanted to offer people throughout Illinois this unique opportunity to show their support for our state's soldiers."

Attorney General Madigan's Veterans Rights Bureau is dedicated to ensuring that veterans receive the benefits they have earned. The bureau provides veterans with assistance, including case advocacy, health outreach and public advocacy forums. For more information about Madigan's Veterans Rights Bureau, please visit

<http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/veterans.html>.

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