

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Commissioners recognize Ohio National Guard's efforts for Service Members and Families**

This morning during their General Session meeting, the Franklin County Commissioners recognized representatives of the Ohio National Guard for their work to raise awareness to support military members and their families. The month of April is recognized nationally as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, as well as the Month of the Military Child.

"We are excited to be a part of what the Ohio National Guard is doing to support our service members and their families," said County Commissioner John O'Grady, Board President. "These two initiatives – Sexual Assault Awareness Month and the Month of the Military Child – are both very worthy causes and we encourage the community to actively participate in their events."

To mark Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the Ohio National Guard will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Race to Eliminate Sexual Violence 5K Walk/Run on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. at the Scioto Audubon Metro Park. All of the proceeds go to community partners who assist survivors of sexual assault. Details and registration info can be found online at [www.premierraces.com/viewevent.asp?eventID=718](http://www.premierraces.com/viewevent.asp?eventID=718).

Commissioner Paula Brooks will again be attending the Race to Eliminate Sexual Violence. "Sexual violence, in all its forms is unacceptable. Our military has taken great efforts to educate its members, and link commanders to the resources they need to end sexual assault. As civilians we can learn from their efforts too," said Commissioner Brooks. "The fact that one in five women will have experienced sexual assault by the time they complete college, and one in three veterans will experience military sexual trauma is devastating. We must do our part to raise awareness."

The Ohio National Guard's Operation: Military Kids will celebrate the Month of the Military Child with the 2nd Annual Be a Hero for Military Kids 5K Run/Walk and Kids Fun Run on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m., at Otie's Tavern and Pub in Hilliard. All proceeds go directly to Operation: Military Kids. Race registration information can be found online at <http://www.ultrafit-usa.com/#!be-a-hero-5k/cfqf> until the day of the event.

"Sometimes overlooked when thinking about supporting our military families is the effect that deployment of a parent, guardian, or primary caregiver can have on a child," said County Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "We need to make sure that we recognize that when a parent serves, so do the children. Every member of our military families deserves to be supported and celebrated."

"We are thankful to the Franklin County Commissioners for their support of these programs, which are very important to our leadership and our Ohio National Guard Soldiers and Airmen," said Col. Julie Blike, director of Family Readiness and Warrior Support programs for the Ohio National Guard. "Continued awareness and prevention education will help us in our mission to eradicate sexual assault from our ranks. And highlighting the reason many of our Soldiers and Airmen go to work every day, and volunteer to serve in the military--provide our children the tools necessary to grow and remain resilient in a diverse

family environment--is something we take every opportunity to promote. We appreciate the Franklin County Commissioners' help in promoting our keystone events during this very special month of April."

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