



May 24, 2010

County Council recognizes Memorial Day by pledging continued support for King County employees

In advance of the holiday that recognizes the men and women who gave their lives defending America, the Metropolitan King County Council today celebrated Memorial Day with a proclamation pledging its support for county employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve. The proclamation was sponsored by Council Chair Bob Ferguson, who sponsored the 2005 King County Veterans and Human Services Levy, and Councilmember Pete von Reichbauer, the only veteran on the Council.

"County employees that pull double duty by also being members of our National Guard and Reserve deserve our support and appreciation for their service," said Ferguson.

"It is important to recognize the county employees who are not only serving King County citizens through their work here, but who are also protecting county citizens through their military service," said Councilmember von Reichbauer. "It is an honor to acknowledge local National Guard and Reserve personnel who play such an important role in keeping our military strong and our country safe."

The National Guard and Reserve comprise approximately half of the uniformed military forces of the United States. Thirty percent of the country's Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are members of the National Guard and Reserve. Since 2001, members of the National Guard and Reserve have experienced unprecedented levels and length of deployment overseas.

The proclamation recognizes the importance of employers valuing the military service of employees, and pledges King County's appreciation and support for National Guard and Reserve personnel during absences for military training or deployment. King County enforces the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, which protects service members' reemployment rights when returning from a period of service in the uniformed services. King County also supports the military service of its employees in other ways, including the extension of medical, dental, and life benefits to county employees while on active duty.

On hand were representatives of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), an organization established in 1972 that seeks to promote a culture in which all employers support and value the military service of their employees.

"We greatly appreciate the support of the King County Council," said Bob DeWald, ESGR's Employer Outreach Director for Washington State. "Supportive employers are critical to maintaining the strength and readiness of the nation's National Guard and Reserve units."

The proclamation also encourages county residents to participate in the National Moment of Remembrance by pausing for a minute of silence at 3:00 p.m. on Memorial Day to pay tribute to those who have died in service to the nation.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Memorial Day commemorates the more than one million Americans who died while in the military service; and

WHEREAS, Memorial Day has been observed as early as 1866 and was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress in 1971; and

WHEREAS, the observance of Memorial Day honors the sacrifice of our fallen service men and women, their spirit, courage, and commitment to our country and its ideals; and

WHEREAS, all who wear or have worn the uniform of the United States deserve our deep appreciation and support; and

WHEREAS, the National Guard and Reserve, which have experienced unprecedented levels and length of deployment, comprise almost half of America's uniformed military forces; and

WHEREAS, appreciation and support for our country's service members and their families is demonstrated by promoting a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees;

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Metropolitan King County Council, hereby proclaim May 31, 2010, as Memorial Day in King County and encourage all county residents to participate in the National Moment of Remembrance by pausing at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and pay tribute to those who have died in service to the nation.

FURTHERMORE, to honor those who serve in the National Guard and Reserve, we, the Metropolitan King County Council, hereby pledge that King County will continue to:

- recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and

Reemployment Rights Act;

- ensure managers and supervisors will have the tools they need to effectively manage those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve; and
- continually recognize and support our country's service members and their families in peace, in crisis, and in war.

DATED this twenty-fourth day of May, 2010.

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