

# Helping Iowa Military Families

A deployment of a service member can be one of the most trying times for a family. With the expectation of over 3,000 Iowa National Guard members being deployed this year, the Iowa Legislature has taken steps to assist the brave military families staying in Iowa.

## ***Financial Benefits***

A deployment can often have a financial strain on a family, and they may have to move away from their home to make ends meet. Under a new law passed this year, a military spouse would be eligible for unemployment benefits if the individual left their employment because of the relocation of their spouse due to a military assignment in another area. Benefits would be paid out of the Unemployment Trust Fund.

In addition, the Legislature passed a provision to help military families during the winter months when heating costs go up. A public utility providing gas or electricity cannot disconnect service to a residence in which one of the heads of household is a service member deployed for military service prior to a date 90 days after the end of the service member's deployment.

## ***Family Visitation***

Iowa recently enacted a law that allows a parent, who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, to file a petition with the court to modify visitation rights to another family member while deployed. The modification must be in the best interest of the child and will end upon return from deployment. This new law allows children to stay connected to the family of their deployed parent.