

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



## State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

Dear fellow state employees,

Our nation continues to fight the global war on terrorism that started on September 11, 2001, and there is no indication it will be over soon. The State of North Carolina plays a leading role and has a personal stake in this war.

Besides being the home state of some of the nation's most elite active duty forces – such as those at Fort Bragg, Camp LeJeune, Cherry Point, Pope, New River and Seymour Johnson – North Carolina is also proud to be home to more than 11,000 Army and Air National Guard members. We are used to seeing these citizen soldiers and airmen hard at work in our state after natural disasters such as Hurricanes Fran and Floyd, and the winter storms of 2000 and 2003. More than 1,500 were activated for state duty as a result of Hurricane Isabel just last month.

What you may not know is that North Carolina leads the nation in the number of National Guard members called to federal active duty for the war on terrorism. The largest contingent – the 30<sup>th</sup> Heavy Separate Brigade – includes nearly 4,000 North Carolinians and will serve in Iraq for as long as 18 months.

Many of these Guard and Reserve members are state employees. Some have been on active duty for more than a year already, but many more are now being mobilized. Federal law guarantees that their jobs will still be waiting for them when they return home, and it will be up to many of you to help fill the void that they leave.

But the empty desk next to yours is just one symbol of the sacrifice these soldiers are making. They are also leaving behind family and friends who will worry about their safety and who will have to make do without them over holidays, birthdays, and other events when it is normal for families to be together.

This administration is proud to have so many patriotic Americans who are dedicated to serving their state and nation in times of war and peace, both in the military and in civilian jobs. We ask you to let these soldiers and their families know that their state is proud of them and that you appreciate the sacrifice they and their families are making. Please pray for their safe return and that all the world will one day be free from the dark clouds of terrorism and fear.

Handwritten signature of Michael F. Easley in black ink.

Michael F. Easley  
Governor

Handwritten signature of Bryan E. Beatty in black ink.

Bryan E. Beatty  
Secretary  
Department of Crime Control & Public Safety