

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joni Ernst
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Warren and Ernst,

"I dread the sunrise and welcome the sunset hoping to never see another sunrise." Four years ago, that is what I told someone who asked me how I felt over the loss of my son and sadly, I still feel the same way. Since the loss of my son, SPC Etienne Murphy, my life has been turned upside down. All of my joy, peace, and happiness is gone, it's with my son. However, there are so many who have embraced me, and shower me with love, respect and compassion but there is one important facet that is missing in my life and that is the Federal observance of Gold Star Families Day.

In an article, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Anderson III stated that; "We must remember our Gold Star Families, and the support that we owe them. This country owes them all a profound debt of gratitude."

It is imperative that Gold Star Families are appreciated, valued, and acknowledged for the ultimate sacrifices that we all have been forced to endure and live through for the rest of our lives, and this holiday would do just that. At a time now when all Gold Star Families have been painfully impacted by what happened in Afghanistan, we need this holiday now more than ever, It would help many of us to know that the loss of our heroes' lives was not in vain. This holiday would be one of the highest forms of gratitude that Gold Star Families can be shown.

Many have congratulated me on my Gold Star Family license plate, they think it's a good thing. A veteran thought it meant that I had more than one family member in the military. The only people who know about Gold Star Family day (the local observance) are Gold Star Families and organizations that support us.

I believe that once Gold Star Families Day becomes a Federal holiday, people would start to take notice, inquire more about us, become enlightened; hence Gold Star Families receiving nationwide recognition and respect.

To all who read this and have the authority to approve the bill, I pray that it is agreed upon that Gold Star Families Day is important enough to be recognized as a Federal holiday. I am truly

grateful to be a part of a monumental bill being passed to commemorate Gold Star Families on a Federal level.

Gold Star Families are the true casualties of war, and hearing, "Sorry for your loss," or "Thank you for giving the ultimate sacrifice," warms our hearts, but hearing these phrases which are greatly appreciated, over and over at dignified transfers, funerals, military events, and from the public, after a while, begin to painfully sting our irreparable hearts because we all feel forgotten, disrespected, and discarded as time progresses, but having this wonderful nation declare that we are worthy of having a day that brings this country together to support and learn about us, is truly being "Sorry" in action.

With sincerest thanks and gratitude,

Sheila Mitchell-Murphy
Mother of SPC Etienne J. Murphy
Syria May 26, 2017
RLTW!