



**MARTIN O'MALLEY**  
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE  
100 STATE CIRCLE  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925  
(410) 974-3901  
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

**Media Contacts:**

Rick Abbruzzese  
Office: 410-974-2316  
Cell: 443-336-1556

Christine Hansen  
Office: 410-974-2316  
Cell: 443-336-5270

## **GOVERNOR O'MALLEY, VETERANS AFFAIRS UNVEIL GOLD STAR LICENSE PLATE**

**ANNAPOLIS, MD (December 18, 2007)** – Governor Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown, joined by Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary James Adkins and MVA Administrator John Kuo, today unveiled the Gold Star Family license plate to recognize and honor the service and sacrifice of those Maryland families who have been awarded the Gold Star pin by the U.S. Department of Defense. Maryland has numerous military and veteran-related license plates. Until now, there was no plate to recognize the sacrifice of Maryland's Gold Star Families.

"I am honored to unveil the Gold Star license plate today to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation and their families," said Governor O'Malley. "This license plate will give our families and our fellow citizens one more opportunity to honor those we had the privilege to call our friends, our neighbors and our loved ones. We would not be the strong state we are today, if it was not for generations of common Americans who have achieved uncommon things. This recognition is the least we can offer in remembrance of these fallen soldiers' loved ones."

To honor those Maryland families, the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration has partnered with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs to design the license plate. The idea for the Gold Star Family license plate came from the family of Staff Sergeant Christopher Swanson who was killed during his third tour in Iraq in July of 2006.

"I have spent 23 years in uniform and served for 10 months in Iraq," Lt. Governor Brown said. "Every day of every week during my career in public service has been driven by the articulation of duty and patriotism by Maryland's armed service members and I'm proud of the commitment

Governor O'Malley has made to Maryland's veterans. The Gold Star License Plate is a simple, yet profound, way to honor our heroes."

"For hundreds of years, Marylanders have heeded their nation's call to duty. Today a new generation has answered the call and it is Maryland's duty to ensure that their service and sacrifice is appreciated. This license plate is just another way to thank and honor all Maryland veterans and their families for their unselfish service," said Secretary Adkins.

"The Maryland license plate offers a unique form of recognition and it is appropriate for the State to honor our nation's fallen and their families in this special way," said Transportation Secretary John D. Porcari. "The constant visibility of these special plates on vehicles across the state will help remind Marylanders and others that many of our sons and daughters have made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom."

The Department of Defense, under the authority of the U.S. Code, presents the Gold Star pin to immediate family members of service personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving their country. Ninety Marylanders have died in our most recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. For those families who elect to display a Gold Star Family license plate, it is one more opportunity to honor their loved one. It also allows fellow Marylanders to recognize and honor these families for their almost unbearable sacrifice for the sake of our future and our freedom.

Gold Star plates are issued to parents, children, or spouses of members of the military who were killed in action during wartime service. Each person who meets the requirements under the Federal Gold Star DD Form 3 is eligible to purchase a plate. The plates may only be obtained through the Glen Burnie MVA Headquarters. The plate will be available February 2008. The Motor Vehicle Administration will begin taking applications on December 19, 2007.

###