

Guide for Vigil Hosts

Our vigils will be simple and dignified. We'll gather at 6:30 PM (local time) on the date we designate over e-mail for the vigils to begin and we will hold candles to remember those who have been killed in Iraq.

Together, we'll acknowledge the sacrifices made by more than 2000 American men and women in Iraq—and their families. It is a time to stand with them, honor them and speak out against the war.

This is not a rally or a place for speeches or announcements. This is simply a moment to stand with military families everywhere. This principle is important. We ask that you only attend the event if you agree to abide by them.

This event will be most powerful if it takes place on the same evening all over the country. In the interest of simplicity, our sign-up tool does not have a way to schedule a different time or date.

1. Pick a location and register.

The very first step in coordinating a vigil is to pick a location.

As soon as you have picked a suitable location, register your event with us at this link:

<http://political.moveon.org/event/iraqvigils/>

This will help us keep track of how many vigils are being organized and it will also help your neighbors find your event in the event that they cannot hold their own. We'll invite other MoveOn members to your vigil if you register it.

Depending on the place you choose, it's possible you may need a permit. Call your local police department or town hall to find out. Please DO respect the local laws and regulations. In some rural and suburban areas in the country, a local mall, supermarket or other big store is often the most desirable place to reach a lot of people. However, public gatherings are usually not permitted at those privately-owned places. If you want to hold your vigil at such a location, make sure to call the management in advance and get permission.

2. Invite Others to the Vigil

Use the vigil host pages to invite friends, family, colleagues and others:

<http://political.moveon.org/event/iraqvigils/hosts>

Tip: You can also use your host tools to get to the FAQ, materials page, see who has RSVPed, contact your attendees or update your contact information.

3. Print out the placards

We've created some downloadable placards that you can print. These signs will indicate to people passing by what this vigil is all about. Pick the one that most suits why you feel moved to join this vigil and hold the sign during the vigil.

They are available here:

<http://political.moveon.org/iraqvigils/materials.html>

If you have a family member serving in Iraq please bring a picture of them. Since most of the vigils will likely be silent, the placards and pictures can be used in place of speeches and words. The images of members holding placards at past vigils have been incredibly moving and are why we continue to use them. We added the pictures because this is about real people who have

been lost and about their families, all of our families. Sometimes images are more powerful than words. The placards and pictures will also help others looking on to see you and join your vigil. As the event coordinator, you should also print out half a dozen extras, in case some people don't bring their own.

4. Invite the press

We want to make sure that the press understand how many of us have come together to honor this moment and think about what has occurred so far in Iraq. If you have time, please send an advisory about your vigil around to your local media. We will make a customizable one available to you and all you will have to do is fill in your local information. A MoveOn volunteer or organizer may contact you to help you with your media outreach. If someone from MoveOn does contact you, it would be great if you could coordinate your efforts with them.

If you don't have time to contact the media about your event, please be prepared to talk to reporters if they show up at your event. If a reporter does come to your vigil, it is important to deliver a clear and consistent message. When talking to reporters, it is OK to keep repeating the same message over and over. It may feel strange to do that, but the reporters are used to it. They can only print (or show on TV) what you say. So only say what you want them to print. We understand that talking to the press can be somewhat intimidating – but don't let it be! Know what you want to say and practice it before hand and we've included a few talking points that might be helpful.

You can find our sample advisory and talking points here:
<http://political.moveon.org/iraqvigils/materials.html>

You can find the phone numbers and other contact information for some of your local media here:
<http://capwiz.com/wa/dbq/media/>.

For local AP contact information: www.ap.org/pages/contact/contact.html

If you are short on time, here is a quick way to prioritize who and where to call:

Outlet	Info You Need	Why You Want to Include Them
The Associated Press (AP)	The general phone number and e-mail for the local office in your state.	They are a syndicate, meaning other outlets often pick up their stories. They also keep a "daybook" or list of events in the area that other media outlets use when deciding what to cover. You definitely want them to know about your event and post it in their daybook!
Your Local TV Station that covers local news daily.	The phone, e-mail, and fax number of the newsroom or assignment editor.	Since they are local, they are going to be interested in what is going on in the area. Most people get their news from tv.
Your Local Daily Newspaper(s)	The general phone number and e-mail for the newsroom. You will also want to find the number of the news editor at the metro/city desk if possible, since that editor will decide whether to cover your event	Since they are local, they are going to be interested in what is going on in the area.

5. At the Event

Here is a sample schedule for your vigil. Don't feel pressured to stick to it, but please do use it if you find it helpful.

- Arrive 15-20 minutes early. Vigil should start at 6:30 PM.
- Light a single candle to signal to people that you'll be holding a vigil
- Let the vigil proceed in silence
- Thank everyone for coming and end the event
- Ask folks if they can help you and start cleaning up.

Here are some other things you could add to your vigil if you want.

- Read the Names of those killed in Iraq (Either all 2000 or just those from your state or community.) Get a list: <http://www.icasualties.org/oif/Statecity.aspx>
- Setup luminary bags along the road or street.
- Ask a veteran, a military family member or a gold star family member to speak.
- Create a gathering of all of the candles in one place at the end of the vigil

The American Friends Service Committee has some suggestions for ways to represent the deaths.

<http://www.afsc.org/2000/resources.htm>

Bring Extra Candles

We'll be asking people to bring their own candles, but as a coordinator you should always have some extra on hand just in case. Hardware stores often sell "Plumber's Candles" that work well.

Another thing to watch out for is falling wax. When wax drips onto the ground and dries it can be slippery and dangerous and its generally a good idea to prevent wax from dripping on the ground. The best solution is to bring your candle in a lantern or holder because these also protect your candles from going out in the wind. You can find inexpensive candle holders at the drug store, or you can use some cups or glasses from your house and place small votives or tea lights in them. If you're using tapered candles a great solution is to poke a small hole in the center of a cupcake wrapper and slide it over your candle before you light it, that way the cupcake wrapper will catch the wax as it drips. You can find cupcake wrappers at your grocery store.

Bring a digital camera and take lots of pictures.

This event will only impact politicians and the press if we can show them what happened. Send your best photos to vigilpics@moveon.org. *(Please be sure to send the photos from the same email address you used to host or sign-up for a vigil and please also be sure to send the photos as attachments, not pasted into the body of the email.)*

6. Be gracious and courteous and make sure the ground rules are followed.

These events are meant to honor those who have died and show our unity. An important part of your role as a coordinator is to help ensure that the vigil remains dignified, respectful, and safe. This may include showing leadership in the unlikely event of a conflict. Of course, you can also ask for help from others in your group if you need it.

7. Fill out a quick post-vigil survey

The surveys are really important – they help us understand what works and what doesn't. We want to make our future events better and easier for you. This is the best way to let us know how to do that. The survey link is here: <http://political.moveon.org/iraqvigils/reportback.html>