

SENATE COMMEMORATION NO. 41

Introduced by: Senators Tapio, Bolin, Cammack, Cronin, Curd, Ewing, Frerichs, Greenfield (Brock), Haverly, Heinert, Jensen (Phil), Klumb, Kolbeck, Langer, Maher, Monroe, Nelson, Nesiba, Netherton, Novstrup, Otten (Ernie), Partridge, Rusch, Russell, Soholt, Solano, Stalzer, Sutton, Tidemann, White, Wiik, and Youngberg

A LEGISLATIVE COMMEMORATION, Commending and honoring the service and sacrifice of Army Corporal Branden Stackenwalt of Rapid City to our country and to soldiers recovering from post traumatic stress disorder.

WHEREAS, Corporal Branden Stackenwalt has served his country and our military with honor and distinction in deployed tours of both Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Branden Stackenwalt suffered critical injuries in an improvised explosive device attack in September of 2009; and

WHEREAS, he endured dozens of surgeries to repair damage to his spine, arm, and legs and underwent months of therapy to regain cognitive and physical function in the wake of horrific injury; and

WHEREAS, Branden has since conducted himself in a manner of humble courage and effervescent positivity that is an inspiration and comforting encouragement to military veterans and civilians alike; and

WHEREAS, Branden's unique experience, perspective and knowledge of post-military adjustment, and physical struggle after being injured in battle represents a skillset of compassionate wisdom and genuine empathy that cannot be duplicated by any academic degree, graduate, undergraduate, or otherwise; and

WHEREAS, Branden's special abilities of communication and kindness are a unique resource



that cannot be emulated in the clinical or mental health armatures of the Veteran's Administration system of care alone; and

WHEREAS, Branden has expressed a continual desire to be of ongoing service and assistance to his nation, his state, and his fellow soldiers; and

WHEREAS, our nation suffers the peacetime loss of dozens of servicemen and women each year by suicide when they become overwhelmed by the unseen scars to mind and heart; and

WHEREAS, our honored veterans routinely exhibit willingness to talk openly of their battlefield experiences and struggles only to fellow veterans with whom they share an irreplaceable bond of common task and trauma; and

WHEREAS, Branden Stackenwalt has repeatedly shown profound skill and effectiveness in effortlessly communicating a joyful warmth of uplifting human kindness necessary to help suffering soldiers find comfort and support in their times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, Branden is a priceless example of a soldier willing to help service members and civilians alike to understand the lasting challenges and scars of wartime deployment:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT COMMEMORATED, by the Ninety-Third Legislature of the State of South Dakota, that Army Corporal Branden Stackenwalt be commended and honored for his service and sacrifice to our country and for his continued desire to serve fellow veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.