

Teri Johnson

Good Morning. I'd like to start off by thanking Senator Ananich for introducing SB 1047. Thank you Chairman Casperson and members of the Transportation Committee for taking up SB 1047 today.

This bill means more than I can put into words. I would like to share a little about my son, Sgt. Joe Johnson.

Joe deployed to Afghanistan in December 2009 with the 27<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, 161<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineers Airborne – "Rock Company" as Counter-IED and Route Clearance Patrol – As one officer described it....the most dangerous job in modern times. He was a team leader, dismount leader, field medic. He volunteered for every mission. He worked with armed forces from other countries and was one of a select few handpicked to teach the Afghan army the skills in which he was trained. He enjoyed the Afghan people, especially the children. He loved his fellow soldiers, and they loved him.

On June 16, 2010, Joe volunteered for what he knew would be a dangerous mission. Let me share with you an excerpt from a letter I received from the ground commander that day **"As you know Joe was a very impressive young man. He immediately made a lasting impression on my team as someone that we could trust in any situation. Our assessment proved correct as Joe did everything he could to heroically protect the lives of his fellow platoon on June 16<sup>th</sup>. He knew he was volunteering for a very difficult mission but pushed forward without any hesitation. He is a true hero and my team will never forget him."** – Capt. Dan Quinn. Command Sergeant Major Hall wrote us **"Joseph was the rare breed today who stepped forward to help others when most step back"**.

His legacy was just beginning. And what a legacy he was building. It's my job, my mission, to see that legacy live and thrive. Joe was just a guy. Just an ordinary man....who became extraordinary. I have wonderful, funny, exasperating memories of Joe. With the passing of SB 1047, people years from now will see his name and wonder about him and maybe even learn his story. And that, will ensure that Joe will never become only a memory.

Some people never get to meet their heroes. I raised mine. I thank you for letting me share my son, my soldier, my hero with you.