

SENATE RESOLUTION  
8686

By Senators O'Ban, Pedersen, Angel, King, Baumgartner, Tom, Bailey, Honeyford, Parlette, Dansel, Becker, Braun, Hill, Hewitt, Ericksen, Sheldon, Hasegawa, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Cleveland, Lias, Rolfes, Hatfield, Hobbs, McCoy, Hargrove, Darneille, Rivers, Dammeier, Kline, Conway, McAuliffe, Frockt, Billig, Chase, Fraser, Eide, Nelson, Padden, and Roach

WHEREAS, For his acts of heroism and selflessness, Captain William Swenson was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2013; and

WHEREAS, During his military service, William Swenson served as an adviser with the Afghan Border Police Mentor Team in support of the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, and the 10th Mountain Division; and

WHEREAS, On September 8, 2009, Captain Swenson and others were engaged by anti-Afghan forces in the Ganjgal Valley within 100 meters of Ganjgal Village, forcing Captain Swenson to simultaneously return fire while directing troops where to go to provide cover fire for soldiers pinned down by the insurgents' initial volley; and

WHEREAS, Captain Swenson called for immediate suppression on preplanned targets and for smoke to cover the withdrawal of the lead element, but due to the close proximity of insurgent fighters and the unavailability of smoke, multiple indirect fire missions were unsuccessful in deterring the enemy's advance; and

WHEREAS, Enemy soldiers began moving to flank the forces pinned down behind terraces and in trenches, where Captain Swenson discovered his partner advisor and noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Westbrook, who was hit in the face and chest and lay exposed in an open area; and

WHEREAS, Captain Swenson returned accurate fire and repelled the enemy, despite coming under direct fire that killed two adjacent soldiers and wounded another, and immediately began rendering first aid; and

WHEREAS, As the anti-Afghan forces began firing and calling for Swenson and his group to surrender, Swenson halted first aid just long enough to throw a grenade, eliminating the immediate threat to their position and forcing the enemy back, an act of resistance that inspired the pinned troops to rally, and their subsequent response disrupted the enemy attack and pushed them back beyond hand grenade range; and

WHEREAS, Captain Swenson helped carry his wounded partner, Westbrook, with rocket-propelled grenades striking close-by, across 200 meters of terraced open ground where they successfully loaded Westbrook into a waiting MedEvac helicopter which took him to the support hospital at Forward Operating Base Wright; and

WHEREAS, Swenson and others then manned unarmored vehicles and reentered the kill zone two times to evacuate wounded and bring them to the casualty collection point, while Swenson communicated via radio with the air support pilot attempting to determine the location of missing soldiers; and

WHEREAS, When it became clear that a third return to the combat zone with the unarmored vehicle would be impossible, Captain Swenson gathered all available combat power to lead a return to the kill zone using a small convoy of Humvees and armored trucks, an armored ABP truck, and two ANA vehicles; and

WHEREAS, Despite accurate rocket-propelled grenade and machine gun fire, Captain Swenson and others succeeded in rescuing and recovering several wounded and dead, but were forced by the volume of fire to drive past several marked positions deeper into the ambush; and

WHEREAS, Having finally verified the location of the last missing soldiers, Captain Swenson and others drove up through the kill zone one final time, successfully finding their comrades in a deep trench that had been impossible to see from ground angles during previous trips and recovered the bodies of their fallen comrades while providing covering fire; and

WHEREAS, Captain William Swenson, graduate of United States Army Ranger and Airborne School, received his commission as an Infantry Officer in 2002, and served courageously and with valor while stationed three times in Iraq and twice in Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, For his bravery, Captain Swenson received numerous revered honors and awards including the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, and the Combat Infantry Badge; and

WHEREAS, He dutifully served as a mentor to members of the Afghan National Security Forces and was deservedly promoted to the esteemed position of Army captain; and

WHEREAS, Captain Swenson fought nobly and gallantly to protect and serve his country, fellow military men and women, and the Afghan and Iraqi people; and

WHEREAS, Captain Swenson always went above the call of duty, remained in control, and protected his fellow soldiers; and

WHEREAS, Captain Swenson eventually retired from military duty in 2011, settling in Seattle, Washington;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate humbly honor United States Army Captain William Swenson, who fought nobly and gallantly to protect his country and fellow soldiers and earned the distinguished Congressional Medal of Honor, for his bravery and sacrifice, and give due recognition for his courage, selflessness, and devotion to the United States of America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to United States Army Captain William Swenson.

I, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate,  
do hereby certify that this is a true and  
correct copy of Senate Resolution 8686,  
adopted by the Senate  
February 18, 2014

HUNTER G. GOODMAN  
Secretary of the Senate