

I will have amendment also to deal with other subjects. There will be other amendments that will attempt to improve the underlying bill.

My bottom line is this. In this brief opening set of comments, I just want to make the point that the bill before us is not the bill that the President recommended. It is not the bill that I think could have come out of committee. It is a bill that requires a lot of work. It is going to take a lot of time. When we try to do the amending process on the floor of the Senate, we don't necessarily end up with the best of products—just because of the way we have to proceed. It is regrettable we have to do it that way, but since we are opened up to a series of amendments, then I think we will have to have the indulgence of everyone as we present and debate those amendments and hopefully get them passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### REMEMBERING FORMER SENATOR HOWARD CANNON

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is a very sad day because Nevada lost one of its great citizens—Howard Cannon died today.

Howard Cannon served in the Senate for 24 years. He left the Senate in 1982. He was a wonderful man. I have great memories of him when I worked as a police officer, when I was going to law school. Howard Cannon had been a bar examiner before coming back here. He was a very fine lawyer, had a great legal mind. He tutored me, as busy as he was as a Senator, to help me pass the bar. I am always grateful for that. I am grateful for all he did for me as I moved up the political ladder to different offices.

I remember the first political office I ran for was the hospital board. His chief of staff, Jack Conlin, through Senator Cannon, gave me some money for this race. He was always very caring about me, and I cared a great deal about him. I do have, though, some satisfaction because just a couple of weeks ago, on his 90th birthday, I came to the Senate and talked about what a fine man he was, how much he had done for the State of Nevada. I talked to him that day on the telephone.

#### COMMEMORATING SENIOR AIRMAN JASON CUNNINGHAM

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I rise today to commemorate a fallen

hero from my home State of New Mexico—I see Senator BINGAMAN so I think it is appropriate to say “our home State”—Senior Airman Jason Cunningham. He lost his life this week while trying to save the life of another serviceman in eastern Afghanistan.

I express my heartfelt condolences to Jason's wife Theresa; his daughters, 2-year-old Hannah and 4-year-old Kyla; as well as his parents Larry and Jackie. I know I speak for all New Mexicans when I say how proud we are of your husband, father, and son, and that our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Jason was a member of the Air Force's elite pararescue team whose mission is to rescue downed pilots in hostile territory. He joined the 38th Rescue Squadron because it was his passion to save lives, and that is exactly what Jason and his comrades were doing this week when he came under heavy fire from the al-Qaida force.

During an attempt by our forces to land a reconnaissance team in a mountainous region known to be inhabited by al-Qaida and Taliban, one troop fell from a helicopter when it was hit by enemy fire. Later, it was Jason and his rescue team who bravely went into the area where the trooper and helicopter were down in an attempt to extricate him. A heavy fire-fight ensued and Jason and five other Americans lost their lives.

I know that words are of little consolation at such a difficult time for Jason's loved ones, but I want his family to know that all New Mexicans—this Senator, and I am certain my colleague, Senator BINGAMAN—mourn with them today. I am sure that for Jason's heroics his country will bestow upon him one of the most highly respected honors it can give, the Purple Heart. Such valor deserves no less.

The loss of such fine Americans as Jason in the war on terrorism can be heartrending, but as a nation we must honor the sacrifices of men and women like Airman Cunningham and remain steadfast in our resolve to protect our freedoms and liberty from terrorism.

President Bush has told us many times that this war would not be quick or easy, and it would be good to remember that while we mourn the loss of a good man like Jason Cunningham.

I ask unanimous consent that a detailed statement surrounding the young man and his family headlined “New Mexican Dies Trying to Save Others” from the Albuquerque Journal, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### NEW MEXICAN DIES TRYING TO SAVE OTHERS

(By Miguel Navrot)

Jason Cunningham was one of the best the Air Force had to offer.

Cunningham served as a pararescueman—trained to rescue downed pilots from the most hostile of enemy areas—in one of the military's elite teams, sometimes compared to the Navy SEALs.

Cunningham, who grew up in Carlsbad and Farmington and recently lived in Gallup, once considered becoming a SEAL as a Navy petty officer. He had passed the Navy's fitness test but decided to move to the Air Force.

“I didn't want to kill people,” Cunningham told Airman magazine, an Air Force publication, in October 2000. “I wanted to save them.”

Cunningham, 26, died trying to save another serviceman Monday. He was one of eight soldiers killed in renewed fighting in eastern Afghanistan.

The remains of seven of those servicemen arrived Tuesday at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Jason's parents, who live in Gallup, learned of their son's death Tuesday morning.

“We're very proud of our baby,” Jackie Cunningham said of her son as she tried to hold back tears at a family news conference on the lawn outside their blue ranch-style home.

“Jason died doing what he liked to do, save lives,” said his father, Larry “Red” Cunningham, choking on his words as he read a brief statement.

Since last summer, Cunningham, a senior airman, was stationed at Moody Air Force Base near Valdosta, Ga., with his wife, Theresa, and two daughters, 2-year-old Hannah and 4-year-old Kyla. He was deployed Feb. 1, his family said.

“We last heard from him on Saturday,” the father said.

Cunningham was the middle child of the family. Standing next to his parents were his brother, Chris, 29, of Washington state, and his sister, Lori, of Farmington.

The family said memorial services will be in Georgia and in Carlsbad this week. A funeral and burial are planned for next week in Camarillo, Calif., where his wife is from.

Cunningham was born and raised in Carlsbad. The family moved to Farmington just before his high school years. After graduating from high school, Cunningham went into the Navy for four years before moving to the Air Force.

Cunningham began the Air Force's pararescue school, a grueling 21-month training program that few finish, about 2½ years ago.

Training for pararescuemen, or PJs, concludes at Kirtland Air Force Base. Cunningham graduated from the school on July 7, when he donned the group's maroon beret, Kirtland officials said.

He belonged to the 38th Rescue Squadron.

Tech. Sgt. Tim Donovan, a supervisor for air operations with the school at Kirtland, called Cunningham “kind of silly, kind of goofy,” with a heart totally dedicated to the pararescue mission.

“He had several setbacks that he overcame and persevered through all the training,” Donovan said. “He never quit. He was totally focused. . . .”

“A lot of times you have kids who don't feel they have their hearts into it or they're just in it for the beret or they're doing it for something other than the motto (That Others May Live). That wasn't him at all.”

Cunningham is the fourth pararescueman the Air Force has lost in the past three months. The Air Force has about 300 pararescuemen.

“They're a small, tight-knit community, and all of them will most assuredly feel the loss of one of their own and mourn his passing,” Kirtland spokeswoman 2nd Lt. Kelley Jeter said Tuesday.

Theresa Cunningham spoke to her parents early Tuesday.

“She was hysterical. She talked to her mom and said, ‘Jason is dead.’ That's it,” said her father, Lito D'Castro.