



Statement of Mayor Brent Taylor Regarding Military Leave of Absence –Jan 8, 2017

Serving as the mayor of North Ogden City has been one of the greatest honors of my life and the highlight of my civilian professional career. Service is really what leadership is all about. I am announcing today that I will be deploying to Afghanistan to continue my service as a member of the Army National Guard.

Utah law provides for an orderly process to temporarily replace an elected official who is absent for military service for a time, and there will be a temporary mayor appointed to entirely fulfill the duties of my office here while I am serving overseas. I have full confidence that the City will continue to operate at the high level of service that our citizens have come to expect from our outstanding City Staff, our very capable City Council, and a soon-to-be-appointed temporary mayor.

There are three great loyalties that have guided my life and everything in it: God, family, and country. While I am far from perfect in any of these respects, I have given my life to serve all three of these loyalties whenever and however I can.

Right now there is a need for my experience and skills to serve in our nation's long-lasting war in Afghanistan. President Trump has ordered an increase in troops, and part of the new strategy focuses on expanding the capabilities of the Afghan commando units. I will be assigned to serve on an advisory team training the staff of an Afghan commando battalion. It is anticipated that I will serve for a period of 12 months.

Military service involves the entire family, and my family is proud to be a military family. My good wife has supported my military service since the moment we walked together into the recruiting office to enlist in the Army three days after our engagement almost 15 years ago. Together with our seven children we are looking forward to this opportunity to again join the thousands of other Utah National Guard families and hundreds of thousands of American families who have honorably sent a service member on deployment. For us, ours is a small sacrifice compared to what so many throughout our nation's history have done and given to keep this, "the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave."

President John F. Kennedy expressed some of the most remarkable words in recent American history during his Inaugural Address in 1961, when he said: "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country."

In an era of divisiveness and self-gratification, President Kennedy's words are needed today more than ever. And as my family and I undertake this opportunity to serve our country, I encourage each of you to find some way in 2018 to "ask not what [our] country can do for [us] [but] what [we] can do for [our] country." Whether it is volunteering at a charity organization, reading to children at a school, or simply helping a neighbor, there are ways all around us to brighten someone's day, to lift another's burdens, and to make our city, state, and country a better place.

In the immortal words of Mother Teresa: **"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."**