

SFC Grant Quezada
U.S. Army
75th Ranger Regiment
AZ National Guard

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Grant Quezada, and I am here today representing several businesses under the parent company of Founding Fathers Collective. I stand before you as a proud United States Army veteran, having served our country for 17 years. As a 100% service-connected disabled Special Operations Veteran, I have deployed six times to Iraq and Afghanistan, dedicating eight years to active duty and the past nine years serving in the Arizona National Guard.

In addition to my military service, I have ventured into the business world. Upon returning to Arizona in 2014 with my wife and children, I opened John Hancock Barbershop. The success of this venture led me to partner with a childhood friend, a fellow Air Force veteran. In 2018, we purchased a 12,000-square-foot property, and amidst the challenging times of October 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we proudly opened the Founding Fathers Collective. This collective houses seven operating businesses under one roof, six of which we own.

I am honored to share that our entrepreneurial efforts have been recognized by Salon Today, a prestigious industry publication. John Hancock Barbershop was featured in Salon Today's list of Top 10 Salons in the United States in 2021, a testament to our commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction. Furthermore in 2022, Founding Fathers Collective was humbly chosen out of 300 other participants at a national level to receive the W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award. This award honors businesses that have demonstrated exceptional growth and community impact. This recognition reinforces our dedication to not only building successful enterprises but also positively contributing to the communities we serve.

However, amidst our accomplishments, it is important to address the challenges faced by veterans transitioning into entrepreneurship. While we appreciate the well-intentioned government programs such as the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD), it is disheartening to find that these programs often present barriers, red tape, and bureaucratic hurdles when seeking assistance.

Fortunately, through the support of our fellow business leaders and entrepreneurs in the community, we have been able to navigate the pitfalls that often come with starting and growing a business. It is the belief and guidance of these individuals that have helped us overcome obstacles and achieve our goals.

I stand before this esteemed committee to shed light on the experiences of veterans in the business world and urge you to consider streamlining government assistance programs. By reducing barriers and fostering collaboration with community-based organizations, we can create an environment that supports the entrepreneurial ambitions of veterans. This will not only benefit individual veterans but also contribute to the growth and prosperity of our communities as a whole.

In conclusion, I am grateful for the opportunity to share my journey and the successes of Founding Fathers Collective with you today. As veterans, we have demonstrated our commitment to serving our country, and now we seek to serve our communities through entrepreneurship. I kindly request your support in ensuring that our transition into the business world is met with the necessary resources, streamlined processes, and partnerships that can help us thrive.

Thank you for your attention, and I am ready to address any inquiries you may have