

Ride Scout Testimony

Chairman Flores, Ranking Member Takano, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

As a simple Cavalryman from Texas, it is truly an honor to be invited to testify in front of such an esteemed body. Thank you for the opportunity.

Today we are in the midst of, and witness to, an historic change in our veteran community. As the active duty military continues to reduce its numbers in the coming years, hundreds of thousands of military service members, along with their families, will converge on the private sector. It is a crossroads, a challenge, and also an incredible opportunity.

I say a challenge, because there are literally not enough existing cubicles, desks, storefronts or jobsites in this great country to absorb them all. And what's more, after more than 12 years at war, this generation of innovative and eclectic combat veterans will likely not be satisfied by making PowerPoint slides everyday sporting ties or high heels.

But every one of you there on the dais knows well the challenge we face in this arena. What I would like to talk to you about today is the great opportunity we can realize as a nation if we recognize it and provide our support.

For the last decade we sent our volunteer military abroad in defense of our nation to places like Iraq, Afghanistan, the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa—often with a mission and expectations that far exceeded the resources we gave them on the way out the door. But they did not make excuses or come up short on those expectations; they exceeded them.

The professional young men and women of our military merely responded with an entrepreneurial spirit not unlike what our forefathers witnessed after our Revolution when the first patriots turned to the task of building an America worthy of the American Dream.

They responded with a dedication not unlike what we saw when our Veterans were called to heal and rebuild a nation torn apart by a Civil War.

Our nation's veterans have responded throughout history with a spirit and drive that welcomed challenge embraced risk to pursue a better life for their families and their communities.

And the Government has always been a key enabler and reliable partner to our veterans.

When the nation mobilized for World Wars to keep the world safe for democracy. We forged a new generation of leaders in business, government and industry that we proudly

called our Greatest Generation because they helped to start a new economy that rebuilt a country that was living in the shadows of the Great Depression and 4 years of war.

And, with the help of a Congress that gave us the GI Bill, we created a first generation of college educated Americans.

Now some of the logic behind incentivizing these vets to attend college was that there were not enough jobs available and higher education gave the economy the time and space to absorb many of them. But far more important, education gave them the skills and confidence they needed to start their own companies and set the conditions for economic growth that fueled an unprecedented six decades of economic growth.

The current generation of veterans shares with those generations that came before them three very important traits.

First, we work well as teams. Regardless of demographic--- race, ethnicity, or gender--- the military taught us to work with people we didn't previously know—or in some cases relate to or understand.

Second, we solve problems. On the hillsides of Afghanistan or on the roads in Iraq, we learned to solve problems with the resources given without worrying or whining that our higher headquarters did not give us enough.

Last, most of us experienced a post-traumatic growth. As General Casey, former Army Chief of Staff, used to say, “while some of our veterans are experiencing a very real stress from a post-traumatic experience—and they need our help and assistance—the great majority of our veterans returned from combat experiencing a very real, post-traumatic growth. We have a new found sense of confidence. We have a perspective that does not revolve around the petty or trivial. We know that in tight situations, through teamwork and training, we can thrive and survive.” Simply put—we don't sweat the small stuff.

As was the case with our past generations, a public-private partnership is more than necessary—it is essential. Today's veterans need a basic education in the business of business, along with introductions to the network of wealth and capital that provide us the resources we need to get started.

I believe Congress can help stimulate the growth of a new economy going forward it to provide the minimum access to education, training and resources needed to start a business. The cumbersome process of the Veteran-owned business concept needs to be revised and streamlined. In short, the government would serve its veterans best by providing access to capital and then give them the freedom to succeed. If you do this, I promise you will not be disappointed with what they accomplish.

I say these things with confidence because I am one of those veterans. And for 20 years I worked with countless professionals who embody the same spirit and commitment.

In creating RideScout, I was on a journey to make life easier for everyday Americans to find the transportation they needed in the hope they could leave their car behind. We waste so much energy everyday sitting in traffic, burning fuel—I got tired of it. I set out to find a website or mobile App that would show me all my options in one place. I found great sites for buses and some for cabs and even a few carpool sites—but nothing that brought them all together. In Iraq, I was involved in making life better for Iraqis... Today, I'm proud to be making life better for all Americans. While I think its great that someone invented Angry Birds or SnapChat, I think it is a mark of things to come that our company is designed to make a real impact in improving the lives of people and our planet--- and if we happen to make a profit along the way for our investors—there is nothing wrong with that either.

RideScout has found success in large part because I willed it to be and because the culture that I grew up in does not acknowledge failure as an option. But of course I could not have started this company without help. I have spent the last few minutes talking to you about the value of veteran human capital and there is no better proof that I believe what I say than the composition of my team. Four combat vets with over four decades of military service. And when my team needed help to get started—from advisors to sit on our board, to investors, to mentors—I turned to veterans. And they responded as you know they would: they ran to the sound of the guns.

For the last 5, 10 and in some case 20 years, we served our country in support of defending the American dream of free enterprise. Today marks our turn to participate in that dream. And whether you are a for-profit business, a consumer of American goods and services, or a member of Congress, the Veteran is a wise repository in which to invest your time and your money.

People matter.

Want help from someone for the school fundraiser? Find a veteran.

Want someone to stand with you and speak up at City Council on your behalf? Find a veteran.

Want to find a partner to start a business? Find a veteran.

Making it happen...it's what we do.

I am proud to testify today in front of a legislative body that not only understands the challenge we face but also embraces the opportunity to be a partner with and invest in one of our nation's most important enterprises—the U.S. Military Veteran.