

Howard County Council Resolution 95-2019

Local Behavioral Health Advisory Board

Testimony

John F. Way

July 15, 2019

Support

Good Evening,

My name is John Way. I live in Columbia; County Council District 3.

I would like to thank the Chairperson, Ms. Christiana Mercer Rigby, for introducing County Resolution 95-2019 at the request of the County Executive.

I have been a Howard County resident for nearly 40 years. I graduated from Wilde Lake Highschool in 1985 and enlisted in the United States Army that same year.

While in the Army, I was stationed in Heidelberg Germany at USAREUR Headquarters working in the Special Security Operations (SSO) from 1986 till 1989. I held a Top Secret security clearance and handled secure communications for all General Officer staff.

After reenlisting for another 3 years I supported the National War College and National Defense University communications center in Washington D.C. and was then was stationed with SSO at Camp Casey Korea in direct support of SSO within the demilitarized zone (DMZ) of North & South Korea.

After 7 years I completed my tours and was honorably discharged shortly after the Gulf War.

Since leaving the military, I have seen firsthand and experienced how difficult the transition to civilian life can be. Every servicemen's transition is truly unique but is rarely easy and for this reason many get lost along the way.

In 2006 I was fortunate to have an opportunity to buy into the Jiffy Lube franchise. As an employer I was constantly struggling to find skilled and reliable staff, so I made the decision to begin to seek out Veterans, whom I know are highly skilled, able to lead and be lead.

From 2014 to 2018 I hired over 80 Veterans of which approx. 18 were homeless.

Hiring Veterans does not come without its challenges, as many are returning to the civilian world with stress, trauma, mental and physical health problems. After seeking assistance from the VA I received training in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA).

This training proved extremely helpful for me in understanding not only the challenges my staff faced but also gave me deeper insight and awareness in helping my Veteran staff live happy and productive lives. In addition, after training approximately 50% of my staff in MHFA we saw an undeniable increase in both sales, customer satisfaction and reduced turnover rate. It was very clear to me then and now how MHFA training can improve the quality of life for anyone that receives training.

In June of 2018 I trained to be an instructor in Mental Health First Aid and decided to leave Jiffy Lube behind to move forward helping my community of Veterans and the community of Howard County with MHFA training.

I currently sit on the Opioid Crisis Community Council (O.C.C.C.) as a voice for Veterans and to help with this ongoing crisis in our community and I am in the process of becoming certified for training others how to administer Narcan.

It is my hope to fill a position on the Local Behavioral Health Advisory Board as a Veteran and MHFA instructor to better assist with the challenges and needs of the community that I live in and work in.

I look forward to serve our community, county and country and it would be my honor to serve on the board for Local Behavioral Health.

God Bless this county and the United States of America.

Thank You.

John Way