

My name is Mike Bowers, and I am a Hagerstown native and lifelong Marylander.

For 30 of my 50 years, I was an active duty and lived outside of Maryland. But my loyalty to the state never waned. I remained a legal resident of the state and always paid my taxes and voted as often as possible. After my recent transition from the Marines in 2023, I am now back full time in Hagerstown.

Despite the thousands of Veterans in Washington County and high per capita of Veterans and their families and caregivers, it is an area of the state which has been left behind when it comes to proportional resources and services. Developing a state park dedicated to Veteran well-being and care would make up for years of neglect and directly benefit those of us who truly need it.

You see, each war carries with it different type of injuries and outdoor therapeutic services proves important for them all. Beyond those services, consistency is critical to make a difference and having a stable funding stream from the state is critical.

My personal story involves multiple traumatic brain injuries while training for and fighting in Iraq. I will share those experiences in my testimony.