

Testimony of Chief Warrant Officer (Ret.) Will Tobin

Deputy Director, Berks County Veterans Affairs Office

**Before the Joint Public Hearing of the House Intergovernmental Affairs & Operations
Committee and the House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee**

November 17, 2025

Chairmen, Members of the Committees, distinguished guests, and fellow veterans:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Will Tobin. I am a retired Army Chief Warrant Officer and currently serve as the Deputy Director of the Berks County Veterans Affairs Office. I am also a proud combat veteran of the Iraq War — and a man who has lived with post-traumatic stress since 2009.

I joined the Army at 17 years old. Like many of us who came of age in uniform, the military quickly became both my home and my identity. I rose through the enlisted ranks, and by the time I deployed with the Pennsylvania National Guard Stryker Brigade in 2009, I was serving as a Battle Captain. Because I was active duty at the time and had more doctrinal experience in combat service support operations, I was placed in that critical role.

My responsibilities included creating, coordinating, and executing deliberate combat logistical patrols to seven forward operating bases. We worked twenty-hour days, sometimes thirteen days straight with one day off. The operational tempo was relentless. As the deployment went on, I also trained Iraqi Army transportation units. Like most who served, I experienced enemy attacks — moments that are hard to speak about, but which never truly leave you.

When I came home in late 2009, I brought the war with me. I couldn't sleep. My mind never stopped racing. I was stuck in that same high operational tempo, constantly on alert — “full throttle,” even in civilian life. I distanced myself from my family, consumed myself with work, and battled anger and restlessness that I didn't understand how to control. I was an absent husband and father, even when I was physically present.

I did seek mental health treatment while in the military. But as many of you know, there is always the underlying concern about readiness — about how being honest with your struggles might impact your career. And like so many others, I was offered a series of prescription medications. That approach never felt right for me. I didn't want to numb myself — I wanted to heal.

For years, I managed to stay functional — maybe even “high performing” — but that came at a cost. The war may have ended on paper, but in my mind, it was still going on every day.

When I transitioned into my current role with the Berks County Veterans Affairs Office, first as Acting Director and now as Deputy Director, I thought I had found a new mission: helping other veterans. But listening to so many of their stories — hearing their pain, their losses, their battles with PTSD — brought my own trauma back to the surface. It was as if I was reliving it through them.

Then my colleague, Sean Williams Mulvaney, MD, introduced me to something that changed everything: the **Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB)** treatment.

I received the SGB procedure just a few months ago, and it has truly changed my life for the better. Almost immediately, I noticed a difference — a calm that I hadn't felt in over a decade. I am now engaged with my family again. I don't feel "on edge" all the time. I'm no longer living in a constant state of high alert, and I no longer bury myself in work just to escape my thoughts. For the first time in years, I feel like *myself* again.

This is why I'm here today — not just as a veteran, but as a father, a husband, and an advocate for the men and women who have worn this nation's uniform. We owe it to our veterans to explore every safe and effective treatment that can help them reclaim their lives. The Stellate Ganglion Block is one of those treatments.

SGB is not a magic cure. But for many veterans who have not found relief through traditional therapies or medications, it offers real hope — and, for some of us, a lifeline. I believe this treatment should be **readily accessible and affordable** to all veterans who are battling PTSD. No one should have to suffer for years — or decades — when there are options that can help.

In closing, I want to emphasize that SGB gave me my life back. It gave my family their husband and father back. And it has given me a renewed sense of purpose to ensure that other veterans have the same opportunity for healing that I was given.

Thank you for your time, for your service to the Commonwealth, and for your willingness to listen to the voices of veterans. I truly hope that today's discussion moves us closer to making SGB treatment available to every veteran who needs it.

Respectfully submitted,
Chief Warrant Officer (Ret.) Will Tobin
Deputy Director, Berks County Veterans Affairs Office