

Noe Aguirre, E-5 Sergeant
Proponent Testimony (Written)
SB153- Ohio Veterans NOW Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Program
Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

My name is Noe Aguirre and I would like to thank Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Cirino, and Ranking Member Williams for allowing me to submit proponent testimony in support of SB153. I joined the United States Marine Corps in November, 2007 and finished my service in 2013.

The deployment work up was brutal. I was running numerous live fire and live grenade trainings to desensitize us to fires and explosives. I also did heavy training in Anti-Terrorism, IED (Improvised Explosive Device) training, as well as Martial Arts training. I had to train more and more for each deployment. This was almost foreshadowing to what would lead to my trauma.

On deployment, in Afghanistan, I led a platoon of Marines as advisors for both the Afghan National Army, and Afghan National Police. My platoon continued to sustain high tempo combat operations over an Area of Operations previously held by three battalions that had withdrawn and were replaced and held by squads of advisors training the Afghan forces. My platoon had the most missions and were outside the wire more than any other platoon or squad in the Alpha-Company-Advisors as well as in the battalion. During daily objectives, chow or mission planning/prepping I served as a PSD (Personal Security Detail) to my platoon's Navy Medic (Corpsman) while each time running over 1,800 Meters to the front gates to receive local National civilian/military Casualties whom had hit IED's. These local Afghans were disturbingly injured and a lot of them were kids. As the leader of the triage team, we moved the bomb victims from the gate to our base medical facility and LZ (Landing zone). In the ambulance, I provided tourniquet applications and bandaged major wounds as we prepped them for higher echelon of care. I Aided more than 60 of these casualties in being triaged and evacuated mostly single/double/triple amputees as well as some GSW (Gun Shot Wounds); among other deadly medical issues suffered by the Afghan Local Nationals.

In addition to taking on the responsibility of being the eyes and ears for the entire convoy missions, I mitigated multiple possible IED scenarios throughout each mission, as well as a few firefights where the enemy attacked our convoy using RPG's (Rocket Propelled Grenades). There was a 16 plus hour mission to get there and clear the facility room by room; I walked through the scenario painted by the only two survivors of the attack who spent the night calling in Helicopter Evacuations for all the Casualties, followed by a safe return to home base in Sangin as Lead Vehicle Gunner.

I was already physically suffering with chronic pain during my entire enlistment in the infantry, but we just learned to live with the pain in order to accomplish the mission. However, the transitional care provided by the VA once I EAS'd from the military was inadequate specifically the Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy; the programs are more geared towards geriatrics. The pain continued to get worst, and it started affecting my sleep cycles coupled with the constant nightmares and night sweats, followed by major depression and anger cycles. The crying spells hit about 6-8 months after EAS date. The subsequent 100% PTSD diagnosis from the VA apexed the lowest low of my transitional period. The meds prescribed by doctors were not helping. I have also been doing talk therapy with psychologist on a regular

basis since 2013, with some milestone accomplishments, but only semi-permanent results. I struggled to do basic ADL functions and the medications that the doctor's wanted to give me were giving me more side effects than positive effects. I have been off most if not all psychiatrist meds since 2016 all the while shifting focus on to recreational therapy, exercise therapy, and yoga to support my mental health with mixed results, depression being the most persistent along with night sweats and nightmares. I could not understand why a person with such high functioning and high capacity military career like myself, could be struggling with simple day to day tasks and functions like school. Where I was having cognitive issues and a follow-on diagnosis of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury helped me understand the issue. I had to struggle with relearning my new brain and how to absorb reading material better with no good result. That was my goal for TMS. I wanted to be able to be a normal student not a cognitively impaired one. I tried standard TMS in 2019 with very little to no positive results, except for headaches and numb index finger.

I heard about EEG driven TMS from Jeff Lindquist back in 2016, and I took a tour of the BTC Newport, BTC, West Los Angeles, and PrTMS in San Diego. I witnessed very positive outcomes for the veterans taking EEG driven TMS and also positive results for their spouses and some special needs children as part of a Tricare insurance coverage trial program. In December 2020, I received information about the program FDA trial in Ohio so naturally, I jumped on board.

First and foremost, I want to thank all those responsible for bringing this program to light. I am happy to report that I am going on 2 months without a horrible service-related nightmare of the blood and gore kind. I no longer dream about those poor Afghan local national children that stepped on IED's and landmines—that I used to provide triage and Combat Casualty care for while having to quickly defuse the IED threats in order to receive them and put them on stretchers. My nightmares were not always remembered in the morning but the physical toll it took on my body kept me from sleeping/exercising properly and with this treatment I had with Team Argonaut and Dr. Marci B. I feel like I have regained my sleep back and I am clear minded and untaxed by my military experiences during my sleep cycle. I also lost 45+ pounds during the program with my newfound sleep I had more motivation and drive to get up early in the rosy fingered dawn and get some much needed exercise and recreation, leading to a 13% body fat/mass index and healthy muscular development. Now I can read and absorb a school related book in two to three passes of reading it, versus my old 5 to 9 times with spotty retention. I still feel like I could benefit from follow on treatment and help form EEG driven TMS.