How Can We Address and Prevent Veteran Homelessness in Our Communities?

Our Constitution guarantees each person the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That means that each basic, human necessity for existence should be met: food, water, and shelter. Yet, some of our most generous and brave citizens who have risked their lives to guarantee our inalienable rights, go without them.

The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs states that eleven percent of the adult homeless population are veterans. That’s over 60,000 people, and that’s declined 5.4% from last year! Much of this decline is thanks to the VA’s three-fold focus to end veteran homelessness: 1) outreach, 2) connecting vets with housing solutions, health care, community employment services, and 3) work with federal, state and local agencies.

Together with HUD, Supportive Services for Veteran Families, Fridge Fill Service and other veteran projects like Chris Stout’s Veteran Village, we can bring an end to existing veteran homelessness. I can contribute the “extras”: soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, comb, and bandaids. I can donate to veteran organizations. I can write to my government officials to ask for change to prevent future homelessness. I can visit organizations like the American Legion to better acquaint myself with veterans and discover their needs.

Our veterans enlisted to protect the freedoms we all enjoy. They had no guarantee that we wouldn’t abuse those freedoms, but they fought anyway. Surely, we can make a fraction of the sacrifice they made for us and give unquestioningly.