

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, and members of the Judiciary Committee.

Our rights to life, liberty, and stewardship are at risk on the streets of this state we call home. We would be wise to follow advice from the man George Washington sought out when he needed advice---his Virginia neighbor, George Mason.

Author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights (which Thomas Jefferson would draw upon to craft the Declaration of Independence), George Mason was one of three delegates to the 1787 Philadelphia convention who refused to sign the U.S. Constitution. "I would sooner chop off my right hand," he said, than sign a constitution without a Bill of Rights.

With the hindsight of years---eleven point seven score---it is easy to see his wisdom. We must continue to declare our rights as human beings on this planet, no matter how self-evident they may seem. HB 2367 is a fitting and proper enumeration of these rights:

"It is declared to be the public policy of Oregon  
to guarantee persons experiencing homelessness  
participation in the social and economic life of this state,  
remunerative employment,  
use of and free movement within public spaces,  
participation in and receipt of the benefits  
of the services, programs and activities of state government and local governments  
and housing accommodations of the person's choice,  
without discrimination."

With thanks to those who crafted this powerful statement of human rights, and in agreement with George Mason that this should have been in our Constitution from the very start, we urge unanimous passage by this committee. Thank you.