

The Bill of Rights

The First Ten Amendments
to the U.S. Constitution

Amendment I

Congress shall make **no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.**

What the First Amendment Means

(Part 1-freedom of religion)

- The government cannot force people to belong to a certain religion or to follow certain beliefs.**
- The government cannot force churches to operate in a certain way.**
- Churches and citizens cannot force you to follow certain beliefs.**

What the First Amendment Means

(Part 2-freedom of speech)

- You not only can express yourself through spoken words, but through printed words (ex. putting up fliers), symbols (ex. armbands), music, art, and participation in parades, demonstrations, boycotts (freedom of assembly).
- These words and expressions do not have to agree with what the government might like you to believe.

What the First Amendment Means (cont)

What you can't do, even with your right to freedom of speech...

- You can't express yourself in privately-owned locations unless you have the owner's permission.
- You can't express yourself in a way that might cause others to break a law.
- You can't express yourself in a way that might create intense fear.

What the First Amendment Means

(Part 3-freedom of the press)

- You can read what you want.**
- You can print most of what you want (as long as it's not libel—untrue statements that can hurt a person's reputation).**

Amendment II

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

What the Second Amendment Means

Some issues are better cared for by the states themselves. So states will oversee issues such as: marriage, divorce, traffic rules, driving ages, voting requirements, etc.

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

What the Third Amendment Means

We will not be forced to allow soldiers to stay in our homes. During the Revolutionary War (over 200 years ago) American colonists were forced to house British soldiers. The authors of the Constitution wanted American citizens to never be subjected to such inconvenience, embarrassment, and loss of privacy.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure
...against **unreasonable searches and
seizures**, shall not be violated, and no
warrants shall issue, but upon **probable
cause**...and particularly **describing the place
to be searched, and the persons** or things to
be seized.

What the Fourth Amendment Means

**Police and government officials
cannot search your home, car, etc.
unless they have a reasonable cause
to do so.**

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital ...crime, **unless on an...indictment of a grand jury**, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger;...

Amendment V (continued)

...nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

What the Fifth Amendment Means

- If we are charged with a serious crime, we must be indicted (formally accused) by a grand jury.
- We are entitled to ‘due process’ –i.e. notified of the charges and given a fair hearing.
- We cannot face trial twice for the same crime.
- We cannot be forced to testify against ourselves. In other words, we ‘have the right to remain silent’ if something we say might be used to convict us.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the **right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury** of the state and district...and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to...obtain... witnesses in his favor, and to have the **assistance of counsel for his defense.**

What the Sixth Amendment Means

- **We have the right to a trial by a jury of our peers.**

- **We have the right to face our accusers.**

- **We have the right to have a lawyer.**

- **We have the right to find witnesses whose testimony may help prove our innocence.**

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value...shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved...

What the Seventh Amendment Means

If a disagreement between you and another person could result in a loss of more than \$10,000 (\$20 back in 1787), you have the right to have a jury decide your case.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

What the Eighth Amendment Means

- Bail (a promise--with a payment of money--to not leave before going to trial) should not bankrupt us.**
- Fines should not bankrupt us.**
- Punishments for our misdeeds should be within reason.**

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain **rights**, shall not be construed to deny or disparage **others retained by the people**.

What the Ninth Amendment Means

We have other rights beyond those specifically mentioned in the Amendments.

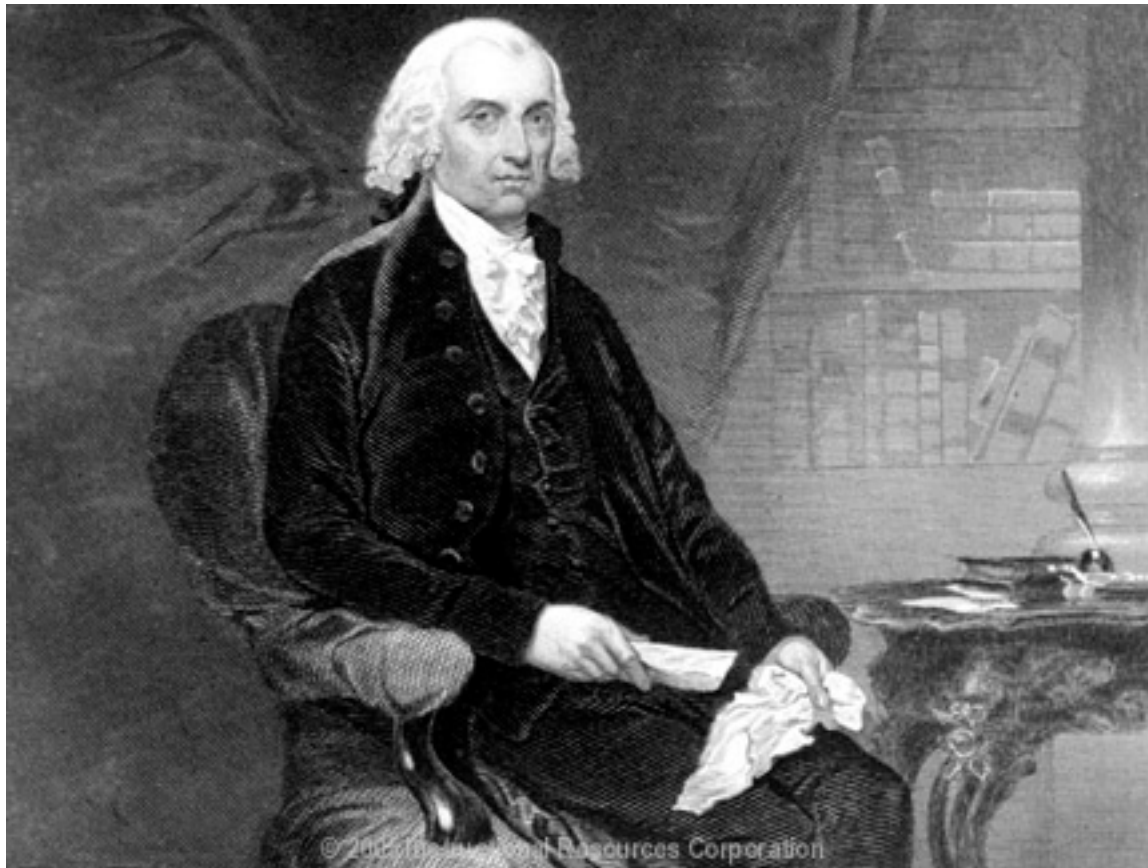
****Can you name some?**

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution...are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

What the Tenth Amendment Means

Some matters are better addressed by the states themselves. States will oversee issues such as: marriage, divorce, traffic rules, driving ages, voting requirements, etc.



James Madison (1751-1836), "the father of the Constitution," and later to be the fourth President of the United States. All of five-foot-four and barely 100 pounds, he spent two-and-a-half years convincing fellow politicians that the Bill of Rights needed to be added to our Constitution.

James Madison, "the father of the Constitution."
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<<http://www.unitedstreaming.com/>>

“The U. S.
Constitution
doesn't
guarantee
happiness, only
the pursuit of it.
You have to
catch up with it
yourself.”



Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) .. IRC.
2005. unitedstreaming. 8 September 2005
<<http://www.unitedstreaming.com/>>

“Don't interfere with anything in the Constitution. That must be maintained, for it is the only safeguard of our liberties.”

Abraham Lincoln

"The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government - lest it come to dominate our lives and interests."

Patrick Henry

“The Constitution is the guide which I
never will abandon.”

George Washington

"The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government."

George Washington

“All government without the consent
of the governed is the very definition
of slavery.”

Jonathan Swift