

# Our Bill of Rights

by  
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The [Bill of Rights](#) is sacred to most Americans, and yet most Americans are ignorant of its contents.

The **Bill of Rights** consists of the first 10 Amendments to the [Constitution of the United States of America](#). To understand the Bill of Rights we need to consider the first 7 words of our Constitution's preamble.

**We the People of the United States**

These seven words refer **only** to **United States citizens**. They **Do Not** apply to illegal immigrants, foreigners on visas, or any other non-citizens residing in the United States. The first and second amendments are integral to each other. The **First Amendment** provides specific rights and protections such as freedom of speech, assembly and protest, and freedom of religion.

The **2nd Amendment** links the **right to bear arms** to the **security of a free state**, which includes protection of our freedoms as granted in the First Amendment, and the freedom to own firearms.

The **9th Amendment** also supports, and expands, the rights of the First and Second Amendments.

The **3rd** and **4th Amendments** can be referred to as property amendments. These two amendments are rights that Americans enjoy from a democratic republic.

The **5th** through the **8th Amendments** address the interaction between US citizens and the justice system.

The **10th Amendment** specifically limits the powers that the federal government has with respect to state rights. In other words the federal government can only dictate law, freedoms, and rights that are addressed in the US Constitution and its Amendments. Conversely states cannot override, amend, eliminate, or disregard the rights and freedoms granted by the Constitution and its Amendments.

Unfortunately, when discussing the **Bill of Rights**, most people talk about it as separate from and not integral to the **US Constitution**. This is shortsighted. For example, [Freedom Forum's](#) article on this subject raises the point in the First Amendment that

“Congress shall make no law. . .,” the article quotes “the people” in the Constitution. In other words, Freedom Forum has taken the quote, “the people” out of context by not including the complete introduction of the Preamble, mainly – “We the people of the United States.” Additionally the article contains misleading examples and inappropriate links.

There is no doubt that the **Bill of Rights** can be confusing with regard to how they apply to both citizens and non-citizens. The First Amendment, which is considered the most important one, clearly exemplifies this confusion. Congress and the Supreme Court need to clarify the entire **Bill of Rights** with regard to citizens and non-citizens. There is too much ambiguity and it needs to be cleared up for the security of our nation.

Now that you may have a slightly deeper understanding of the **Bill of Rights**, they do not come without conditions.

In the world of international politics, being an American is not always easy. Although the US is disliked by other nations or groups, many people worldwide envy American citizenship. They envy the freedoms, liberty, and opportunities that our democratic republic provides us.

While the US is not among them, many nations have realized that the rights and freedoms provided their citizens also come with responsibilities. Consequently these nations are now identifying, and codifying, the responsibilities of citizenship.

James Russell Lowell, an American diplomat in the 1800s, observed that “[A free republic only endures because citizens appreciate both the rights and the responsibilities necessary to its survival, recognizing liberties and duties.](#)” Unfortunately in today’s “enlightened” [sarcastically said] society, many, if not most, Americans do not understand the concept of citizenship and the responsibilities that come with it.

**Responsibilities and Duties** are the obligations that citizens are expected to perform. They are not only the moral foundation of the rights they enjoy but also the foundation of civic responsibilities and duties.

We are so concerned about violating the “rights” of other people that we forget about our own responsibilities and duties. In many public schools across the nation, civics, and government are no longer taught as courses. Their content is often watered down and incorporated in other courses. Students are not taught about citizenship, what it means, and how it is essential to our democratic form of government. The consequences are a lack of understanding the workings of government and what it means to be American.

The sad fact is that those individuals who immigrate to America to become American citizens know more about our government, history, citizenship, and individual duties and responsibilities than most American born citizens. Serving our nation and its people is a requirement of citizenship that includes:

- Supporting and defending the Constitution
- Defending the nation if the need should arise
- Being of service to the nation
- Respecting and obeying federal, state, and local laws
- Staying informed of the issues affecting our communities and nation
- Participating in the democratic process
- Participating in our local communities
- Paying income and other taxes honestly
- Serving on a jury when called upon
- Respecting the rights, opinions, and beliefs of others

Exercising your rights and fulfilling your responsibilities are the features of active and engaged citizenship. With all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, the Constitution does not impose a lot of responsibilities on Americans. However, the Constitution does assume some civil duties, such as service to the nation.

Unlike most nations and countries, non-citizens in the US enjoy many of the same freedoms and rights that Americans enjoy. This situation needs to be changed. For example, with the Biden administration, illegal immigrants receive more benefits ahead of American citizens. In fact they receive some benefits that our citizens never get. It is patently wrong to put non-citizens ahead of our own citizens.

For a secure nation, our laws need to be changed with regard to non-citizens. The rights and freedoms that US citizens enjoy should not apply to non-citizens.

“No people will tamely surrender their Liberties, nor can any be easily subdued, when knowledge is diffused and virtue is preserved. On the Contrary, when People are universally ignorant, and debauched in their Manners, they will sink under their own weight without the Aid of foreign Invaders.”

*Samuel Adams to James Warren, November 4, 1775*