



10-12-2016

The Bill of Rights: What does it say?

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/religion-pandemic-law>



Part of the American Studies Commons, Religion Commons, and the Virus Diseases Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "The Bill of Rights: What does it say?" (2016).
Pandemic Response and Religion in the USA: Law and Public Policy. 79.
<https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/religion-pandemic-law/79>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Pandemic Response and Religion in the USA at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pandemic Response and Religion in the USA: Law and Public Policy by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.





The Bill of Rights: What Does it Say?

The Bill of Rights

The Bill of Rights is the first 10 Amendments to the Constitution. It spells out Americans' rights in relation to their government. It guarantees civil rights and liberties to the individual—like freedom of speech, press, and religion. It sets rules for due process of law and reserves all powers not delegated to the Federal Government to the people or the States. And it specifies that “the enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.”

The First Amendment

The **First Amendment** provides several rights protections: to express ideas through **speech** and the **press**, to **assemble** or gather with a group to **protest** or for other reasons, and to ask the government to fix problems. It also protects the right to religious beliefs and practices. It prevents the government from creating or favoring a **religion**.

The Second Amendment

The **Second Amendment** protects the right to keep and bear arms.

The Third Amendment

The **Third Amendment** prevents government from forcing homeowners to allow soldiers to use their **homes**. Before the Revolutionary War, laws gave British soldiers the right to take over private homes.

The Fourth Amendment

The **Fourth Amendment** bars the government from **unreasonable search and seizure** of an individual or their private property.

The Fifth Amendment

The **Fifth Amendment** provides several protections for people accused of crimes. It states that serious criminal charges must be started by a **grand jury**. A person cannot be tried twice for the same offense (**double jeopardy**) or have property taken away without **just compensation**. People have the right against **self-incrimination** and cannot be imprisoned without **due process of law** (fair procedures and trials.)

The Sixth Amendment

The **Sixth Amendment** provides additional protections to people accused of crimes, such as the right to a **speedy and public trial, trial by an impartial jury** in criminal cases, and to be informed of criminal charges. Witnesses must face the accused, and the accused is allowed his or her own witnesses and to be represented by a lawyer.

The Seventh Amendment

The **Seventh Amendment** extends the right to a **jury trial** in Federal civil cases.

The Eighth Amendment

The **Eighth Amendment** bars **excessive bail and fines and cruel and unusual punishment**.

The Ninth Amendment

The **Ninth Amendment** states that listing specific rights in the Constitution does not mean that people do not have **other rights** that have not been spelled out.

The Tenth Amendment

The **Tenth Amendment** says that the Federal Government only has those **powers** delegated in the Constitution. If it isn't listed, it belongs to the states or to the people.

[◀ Back to Main Page](#)

[How Did it Happen? ▶](#)

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

1-86-NARA-NARA or 1-866-272-6272