

Bill of Rights

[This pdf document contains all the words the Bill of Rights unaltered. For greater understanding and appreciation of this great document that has inspired peoples from around the world, we have applied two helps: 1) Formatting that allows the reader to absorb and digest each paragraph and 2) a short one sentence header over each paragraph that describes the purpose of each paragraph. These are presented in [brackets]. We hope these helps will allow you to appreciate this precious document all the more. www.USCivicsTraining.org]

In the United States, the Bill of Rights is the name by which the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution are known.[1] They were introduced by James Madison to the First United States Congress in 1789 as a series of articles, and came into effect on December 15, 1791, when they had been ratified by three-fourths of the States. Thomas Jefferson was a proponent of the Bill of Rights.[2]

The Bill of Rights prohibits Congress from making any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, forbids infringement of "...the right of the people to keep and bear Arms...", and prohibits the federal government from depriving any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law. In federal criminal cases, it requires indictment by grand jury for any capital or "infamous crime", guarantees a speedy public trial with an impartial jury composed of members of the state or judicial district in which the crime occurred, and prohibits double jeopardy. In addition, the Bill of Rights states that "the enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people," and reserves all powers not granted to the federal government to the citizenry or States.

Bill of Rights *December 15, 1791*

Preamble

Congress of the United States begun and held at the City of New-York, on Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine

THE Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added: And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government, will best ensure the beneficent starts of its institution.

RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, two thirds of both Houses concurring, that the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all, or any of which Articles, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of the said Constitution; viz.

ARTICLES in addition to, and Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.^[4]

Amendments

First Amendment – Establishment Clause, Free Exercise Clause; freedom of speech, of the press, Freedom of Religion, and of assembly; right to petition,

- *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.*

Second Amendment – Militia, Sovereign state, Right to keep and bear arms.

- *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.*

Third Amendment – Protection from quartering of troops.

- *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.*

Fourth Amendment – Protection from unreasonable search and seizure.

- *The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.*

Fifth Amendment – due process, double jeopardy, self-incrimination, eminent domain.

- *No person shall be held to answer for any capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or 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; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence 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.*

Sixth Amendment – Trial by jury and rights of the accused; Confrontation Clause, speedy trial, public trial, right to counsel

- *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 where in the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.*

Seventh Amendment – Civil trial by jury.

- *In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.*

Eighth Amendment – Prohibition of excessive bail and cruel and unusual punishment.

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

Ninth Amendment – Protection of rights not specifically enumerated in the Bill of Rights.

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

Tenth Amendment – Powers of States and people.

- *The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people*