

The Bill of Rights and me

Inscribed upon the Bill of Rights are the ten amendments that are the foundation of the relationship between the government and every American, including myself. While seemingly arbitrary, those very ten amendments have been the stepping stones of the development of the United States and our democratic institutions.

Under the First Amendment, I have been granted the right to be able to freely express my opinions and perspectives. I am able to participate in public discourse through a peaceful assembly. I am able to read journalism that has not been filtered or censored. I am able to practice my religion, should I choose to. I value this right, because it gives me and all Americans the opportunity to make our voices heard. While our country continues to change and grow, I am content knowing that my fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression will remain protected, because "Congress shall make no law" restricting these rights.

The phrase "innocent until proven guilty" has long been associated with our legal system. The 6th Amendment guarantees any person who is accused of a crime the opportunity to present their defense in a court of law, to a jury of their peers. This process has created a fair system where the courts are not stacked to favor one side or another, but the decision is returned to the people after all evidence has been equally considered. I look forward to one day sitting on a jury and participating in my civic duty as a juror.

We the People, as emblazoned in the Declaration of Independence, ultimately are the guarantors of the Bill of Rights and the great American experiment as a whole that has been tried and tested for the last 244 years. I am grateful for this single document that has protected my rights and the rights of all my other fellow Americans since the ratification of the Constitution. As a steward of this document and American democracy, I am determined to continue upholding the same values and beliefs that our Founding Fathers shared.