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The Bill of Rights and Me

“We the People” is easily identified as the opening to the Constitution of the United States. These words resonate with Americans because they affirm that our government was created to serve us, the people. The Constitution was drafted to be the central source of all government powers and has been operating as the supreme law of the United States since 1789. However, it lacked any clear definition of Americans’ rights in relation to their government. To remedy this problem and prevent the government from becoming too powerful, ten amendments, also known as the Bill of Rights, were added to the document and have become an integral part of the Constitution for all Americans.

The Bill of Rights grants rights and civil liberties to all citizens, sets rules for due process of law, and grants all powers not reserved for the government to the people. While the Constitution is over 200 years old, it has endured as the touchstone of national principles for all Americans throughout history. As I mature, I am able to better understand and appreciate the Bill of Rights and how it serves as a benchmark to my rights. Freedom of speech, religion, and press are just some of the privileges that allow me to enjoy the full effects of a democratic country. The more I learn about and interpret our nation’s rich history, I recognize that it is insufficient to merely be aware of our individual liberties. The Bill of Rights reminds me that it is our shared responsibility, as Americans, to *preserve* these individual liberties. It is this mindset that grounds me during the most uncertain, and oftentimes unsettling, political landscapes.

The Bill of Rights was the first official step taken by “we the people” to amend our original Constitution. For more than two centuries, the freedoms outlined in the Bill of Rights have been exercised, restricted, expanded upon and debated. Although the Bill of Rights continues to be a topic of discourse, it was intended to serve as an unwavering guideline for a burgeoning country, and will always be a defining and unifying force for Americans.