

## The Bill of Rights & Me

In a letter to James Madison, in December of 1787, Thomas Jefferson wrote "...a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on Earth...and what no just government should refuse or inference." Thanks to our Founding Fathers, I have been able to grow up in a country where I am allowed to be myself and enjoy many freedoms every day.

Conceivably, the most famous section of the Bill of Rights is the first amendment which states that citizens are allowed freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, and the right to petition the government. Perhaps the most important part for me, is the freedom of speech. As I grow older, I understand our country better and appreciate my ability to state my opinion no matter what others think. The right to petition the government is being used more as protests show that some think that our country needs some changes. Like me, people appreciate their right to change our country's future and state their opinions -- whether it be for good or bad. Freedom of religion is also very important to me. Having grown up in a country where we are free to believe what we want is uplifting. Living where people are malicious to someone for their beliefs would be very upsetting. I am thankful that our founding fathers included the freedom of religion, because I know that I am able to believe what I want, without being punished for it.

As a child, the Bill of Rights did not mean as much to me as it does now. Today, I realize that the rights protected by the Bill of Rights have shaped the US and the people in it. While the US changes everyday, I find it enlightening to know that the rights we have as people are changing as well. I hope this country will continue to change for the better, and as American citizens, we must be grateful for the rights we have. Without them, this country wouldn't be what it is today.