

Bill of rights: four freedoms essay sample

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The first amendment of the Bill of Rights to the constitution guarantees four freedoms: freedom of religion, speech, press and assembly. The Bill of Rights was passed on December 15, 1791. Since then, the freedoms have been debated, discussed, and fought and died for. Many have immigrated to America to receive those freedoms. The Founding Fathers knew what they were doing because they believed in power of ideas and debate, not censorship. The first amendment to the constitution is important because it prohibits congress from establishing an official religion in the U. S., gives Americans the freedom to say what is on their minds, and gives the right to petition and assemble peacefully.

The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States gives every individual the same rights. One right is the constitutional protection for the free exercise of religion. The second right is prohibition of the establishment of religion by the state. The founders of the constitution recognized the freedom of religion as an important factor in establishing a democracy. They also recognized a space of freedom between the government and the people, whereby the government could not force an individual or group to do something they did not want to do. The government is not upholding their part of the constitution. They are trying to tell people that saying prayer in public school is unconstitutional.

In fact, prayer in public school is legal, so is prayer in church and prayer in stores etc. The area which is not legal is when students or teachers pray when engaged in school activities or instruction. This means students or teachers may pray in an informal setting, such as cafeterias and hallways. They may talk about and discuss problems with religion and their beliefs at <https://assignbuster.com/bill-of-rights-four-freedoms-essay-sample/>

that time. A person may come to school early and sit quietly and pray. With the permission of the school a group of students could establish a prayer club. All these things are legal, but what the government is trying to avoid is mandatory school prayer. Mandatory school prayer is illegal and violates the constitution. It would contradict all separation between church and state. If prayer in public school was made necessary the country would most likely be divided. You would have the religious leader ecstatic about the freedom of prayer.

Then you would have offended non-believers or believer of other denominations or people who find the government too controlling. With legalization of prayer, would come disruption in the way the government is run. Whereby the beliefs of an individual, like the president or a member of congress, would set goals using feelings and not thinking through the problem. For example, a president with strong religious beliefs would be against anything dealing with moral issues. The ideals of an individual would then be imposed on another. Also the government, in giving permission to a prayer in school, would imply that one religion was better than the another. This could be solved by giving each major religion a prayer and read separately by individuals.

In all truth, our forefathers were pioneers into our freedom of speech. The Revolutionary War took place in pursuit of the freedoms written about by colonial politicians. The monarch's in England were ultimately unable to do anything to diminish the use of free speech (Armstrong, 26) Overtime, this amendment has been tested in many ways. The " freedom of speech" later covered not just " speech" but also television, newspapers, the arts, and <https://assignbuster.com/bill-of-rights-four-freedoms-essay-sample/>

literature. In its early existence, many felt it was written by and for upper-class white men. United States history tells the stories of the many demonstrations, battles, and wars fought to ensure that the document protects and works for all citizens.

“ Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances”(Constitution, 1st amendment). This Amendment was written by the constitutions framers because they believed that freedom of inquiry and liberty of expression were the hallmarks of a democratic society, but historically, at times of national stress — real or imagined — First Amendment rights come under enormous pressure. During the “ Red Scare” of the early 1920s, thousands were deported for their political views. During the McCarthy period, the infamous blacklist ruined lives and careers. Today, the creators, producers and distributors of popular culture are often blamed for the nation’s deep social problems. Calls for censorship threaten to erode free speech (American Civil Liberties union).

All you ever hear about in the news lately is people getting in trouble for speech. Many Americans embrace freedom of speech for the same reasons they embrace other aspects of individualism. Freedom of speech is the right to defiantly, robustly and irreverently speak one’s mind just because it is one’s mind. Freedom of speech is thus bonded in special and unique ways to the human capacity to think, imagine and create. Conscience and consciousness are the sacred precincts of mind and soul. Freedom of speech is intimately linked to freedom of thought, to that central capacity to reason and wonder, hope and believe, that largely defines our humanity (Smolla).

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The right to assemble allows people to gather peacefully for protests to bring about changes. A woman named Diane Pretty from the United Kingdom is paralyzed from the neck down. She has had Neuron disease since 1999 and is confined to a wheelchair. “ Her disease is at an advanced stage, leaving her unable to speak and having to be fed through a tube.” “ Her intellect and decision-making capacity are unimpaired.” She will be facing death soon from respiratory failure and pneumonia when the disease affects her breathing muscles. All she is asking is to have assistance with her suicide since she is unable to do it herself. So she is using the right to petition to see if she can change the law. Living with that terrible inconvenience would make me even want to commit suicide. It is just unfortunate that she is only forty-three years old and has two children.

In England suicide is legal, but helping someone else kill him or herself is a crime under the 1961 Suicide Act. It is punishable up to fourteen years in prison. The judges in Strasbourg judges said the fact that assisted suicide was a crime in England was not a breach of Diane Pretty’s human rights. To Diane Pretty the European court ruling was her last hope of a legal seal of approval to what she sees as her right to “ die with dignity.” In a news conference Diane Pretty said, “ The law has taken away all my rights away”. She was using a keyboard and computer voice synthesizer. She deserves the right to die when she wants since it is going to happen anyway. Diane and her husband have opened up a petition on Web site in support of her getting help with her suicide. In March 2002, there was an issue with the Education Services Settlement Act. This act was made to protect the students’ education; it is suppose to prevent strikes, slowdowns or lockouts during the

arbitration process. According to some, that is taking the teachers rights away. But according to Dr. Lyle Oberg he said, ' I want to reassure teachers that this legislation does not take away their right to assemble. The legislation's sole purpose is to find resolutions to the current disputes between the teachers and the school boards.'

In conclusion, the first amendment to the constitution is important because it prohibits congress from establishing an official religion in the U. S., gives Americans the freedom to say what is on their minds, and gives the right to petition peacefully. The first amendment was written because at America's inception, the citizens demanded a guarantee of their basic freedoms. If it weren't for the first amendment we would not have such a great society as we have today. The government could have established a national religion, protesters could be silenced, and the citizens could not rally for social change. The first 10 amendments to the constitution went into effect on December 15, 1791. That is two hundred and twelve years ago that we started to become the nation we are today. We have come a long way from the beginning.

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