

How statement, in  
spite of requests to  
do



How many rights do you have? You should check, because it might not be as many today as it was a few years ago, or even a few months ago. Some people I talk to are not concerned that police will execute a search warrant without knocking or that they set up roadblocks and stop and interrogate innocent citizens.

They do not regard these as great infringements on their rights. But when you put current events together, there is information that may be surprising to people who have not yet been concerned: The amount of the Bill of Rights that is under attack is alarming. Let's take a look at the Bill of Rights and see which aspects are being pushed on or threatened. The point here is not the degree of each attack or its rightness or wrongness, but the sheer number of rights that are under attack. Amendment I 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.

**ESTABLISHING RELIGION:** While campaigning for his first term, George Bush said " I don't know that atheists should be considered as citizens, nor should they be considered patriots." Bush has not retracted, commented on, or clarified this statement, in spite of requests to do so. According to Bush, this is one nation under God. And apparently if you are not within Bush's religious beliefs, you are not a citizen.

Federal, state, and local governments also promote a particular religion (or, occasionally, religions) by spending public money on religious displays. FREE

**EXERCISE OF RELIGION:** Robert Newmeyer and Glenn Braunstein were jailed in 1988 for refusing to stand in respect for a judge. Braunstein says the tradition of rising in court started decades ago when judges entered carrying Bibles. Since judges no longer carry Bibles, Braunstein says there is no reason to stand — and his Bible tells him to honor no other God. For this religious practice, Newmeyer and Braunstein were jailed and are now suing.

**FREE SPEECH:** We find that technology has given the government an excuse to interfere with free speech.

Claiming that radio frequencies are a limited resource, the government tells broadcasters what to say (such as news and public and local service programming) and what not to say (obscenity, as defined by the Federal Communications Commission FCC). The FCC is investigating Boston PBS station WGBH-TV for broadcasting photographs from the Mapplethorpe exhibit.

**FREE SPEECH:** There are also laws to limit political statements and contributions to political activities. In 1985, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce wanted to take out an advertisement supporting a candidate in the state house of representatives. But a 1976 Michigan law prohibits a corporation from using its general treasury funds to make independent expenditures in a political campaign. In March, the Supreme Court upheld that law.

According to dissenting Justice Kennedy, it is now a felony in Michigan for the Sierra Club, the American Civil Liberties Union, or the Chamber of Commerce to advise the public how a candidate voted on issues of urgent concern to their members.

**FREE PRESS:** As in speech, technology has provided another excuse for government intrusion in the press. If you distribute a magazine

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electronically and do not print copies, the government doesn't consider you a press and does not give you the same protections courts have extended to printed news. The equipment used to publish Phrack, a worldwide electronic magazine about phones and hacking, was confiscated after publishing a document copied from a Bell South computer entitled " A Bell South Standard Practice (BSP) 660-225-104SV Control Office Administration of Enhanced 911 Services for Special Services and Major Account Centers, March, 1988." All of the information in this document was publicly available from Bell South in other documents.

The government has not alleged that the publisher of Phrack, Craig Neidorf, was involved with or participated in the copying of the document. Also, the person who copied this document from telephone company computers placed a copy on a bulletin board run by Rich Andrews. Andrews forwarded a copy to AT; T