

# Essay on civil liberties and individual rights

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



The concept of civil liberties granting individual rights has historically been a push-pull between majority and minority rights. Until the late 1800's the United States was a majority Christian nation. Setting aside time for Christian prayers and Christian holidays seemed natural and appropriate to everyone whether an activity was stopped during school, a public meeting or in church.

When immigrants from Europe with varied backgrounds and beliefs started arriving late in the 1800's the playing field started shifting. Immigrants were filling jobs which were being created during Industrialization. They were settling into the cities causing a sharp rise in urbanization.

The trend of immigration continued. The country has become multi-cultural with a wide variety of beliefs and concepts of individual rights held among the citizens.

The most influential branch of government which describes and protects civil liberties is the Supreme Court. The "due process law" is invoked to protect those individual rights (usually of minorities) that are being threatened. The Supreme Court has become the court using the "due process law" the most. Most commonly the 14th Amendment has been used by the Supreme Court to protect individuals and their rights from other governmental agencies and from state and local governments mistreating a portion of their constituency by not allowing specific rights.

The rights popularly covered in the present day include protecting religious freedom, protecting women's rights (such as the right to make decisions about her body), sexual orientation (preventing discrimination against homosexual citizens) and rights of immigrants.

Recently immigrants, particularly of Latino and Hispanic origin, have been calling for public discussions of their civil liberties. They want a safe, open discussion about protection of their individual rights. For example, on August 1 WXYZ. com ABC Action news reported angry citizens and Detroit leaders gathering to voice their concerns and fears over the use of racial profiling by Detroit Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers.

The interpretation of individual rights shifts as the culture of the country shifts. The same historical push-pull dynamic takes place only with different players. Now protection of individual rights is popular with citizens. That may change as the culture changes over the years.

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