

THE UNITED STATES BILL OF RIGHTS (SIMPLIFIED)

Note: The first ten amendments to the United States Constitution make up the Bill of Rights. Below are the amendments in simple language:

Amendment 1

Congress can't make any law that:

- Favors one religion over another religion, or no religion at all, or opposes any religion;
- Stops you from practicing your religion as you see fit;
- Keeps you from saying whatever you want, even if you are criticizing the President of the United States;
- Prevents newspapers, magazines, books, movies, radio, television or the internet from presenting any news, ideas, and opinions that they choose;
- Stops you from meeting peacefully for a demonstration or protest to ask the government to change something.

Amendment 2

Congress can't stop people from having and carrying weapons.

Amendment 3

You don't have to let soldiers live in your house, except if there is a war, and even then, Congress needs to pass a law and set the rules.

Amendment 4

Nobody can search your body, your house, or your papers and things, unless they can prove to a judge that they have a good reason for the search.

Amendment 5

Except during times of war or if you are in the military:

- You can't be tried for any serious crime without a Grand Jury meeting first to decide whether there's enough evidence against you for a trial;
- If at the end of a trial, the jury decides you are innocent, the government can't try you again for the same crime with another jury;
- You cannot be forced to admit you are guilty of a crime and if you choose not to, you don't have to say anything at your trial at all;
- You can't be killed, put in jail, or fined, unless you were convicted of a crime by a jury and all of the proper legal steps during your arrest and trial were followed;

- The government can't take your house, your farm, or anything that is yours, unless the government pays for it at a fair price.

Amendment 6

If you are arrested and charged with a crime:

- You have a right to have your trial soon and in public, so everyone knows what is happening;
- The case has to be decided by a jury of ordinary people from where you are, if you wish;
- You have the right to know what you are accused of doing wrong, and to see, hear, and cross-examine the people who are witnesses against you;
- You have the right to a lawyer to help you. If you cannot afford to pay the lawyer, the government will.

Amendment 7

You also have the right to a jury when it is a civil case (a law case between two people rather than between you and the government).

Amendment 8

The government can't make you pay more than is reasonable in bail or in fines, and the government can't inflict cruel or unusual punishments (like torture) even if you are convicted of a crime.

Amendment 9

Just because these rights are listed in the Constitution doesn't mean that you don't have other rights too.

Amendment 10

Anything that the Constitution doesn't say that Congress can do is left up to the states and to the people.

Source: ACLU Delaware. (2018, December 7). Bill of Rights in Simple Language. Retrieved from <http://www.aclu-de.org/resources/know-your-rights/bill-of-rights-in-simple-language/>.