

The Bill of Rights – What is it?

See also 'First Amendment'

'Powers, Separation of

'Proposed Amendments no Ratified'

'Rights Verses Responsibilities'

For the most part, the Bill of Rights is actually a “bill of restraint” against the federal government – granting to the States and to the People certain rights against which the federal government is to have no power. Because these issues have been given to the States and the People, it is illegal for the federal government to make laws, orders, or decisions on these issues.

Of course, some of the issues have to be defined – like, how ‘speedy’ is a ‘speedy’ trial?

The biggest opposition the proposed Constitution ran into was citizens who refused to support a document that contained no guarantees of personal rights and freedoms – the Articles of Confederation did contain them, and the People did not want to give them up. With the adoption of the Constitution, creating a Bill of Rights became the primary business of nearly every state’s legislature. Hundreds of amendments listing our rights were submitted to Congress, and on September 25, 1789, Congress presented the states with a bill for approval and ratification. Ten of the amendments in the bill were ratified by the States, and on December 15, 1791 the ten-amendment Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution. One of the amendments not originally approved passed the amendment process and became law in 1992 as Amendment 27.

One of the things many people do not consider are their responsibilities towards these rights - see “Rights Verses Responsibilities”.

"They [the Bill of Rights] are as clear as the Ten Commandments....
Herein are the sentinels which guard the doors of every home from invasion
of coercion, intimidation and fear. Herein is the expression of the spirit of
men who would forever be free."

President Herbert Hoover