

## Bill O' Frights

The Bill of Rights is the collective name for the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. The amendments were introduced by James Madison to the First United States Congress as a series of legislative articles. These limitations serve to protect the natural rights of life, liberty and property. They guarantee a number of personal freedoms; limit the government's power in judicial and other proceedings, and reserve powers to the states and to the public. This renowned initiative took root in American society and has played an integral role in defending the individual from a prevailing authoritative power. The Bill of Rights, however, is now under attack; not from a foreign entity but rather from within.

The post 9/11 American government is paranoid, taking extra precautions to ensure the safety of its citizens. Nevertheless, one must question when the government decides what is and what is not "for our own good". As educated individuals, and as Republicans, it is only in our nature to inquire how much the government should intervene in our daily lives. Once we came under fire however, the people of the United States seemed entirely willing to go along with the slow but sure erosion of our guaranteed rights. Our freedoms were compromised under the 2001 PATRIOT ACT. The violation of rights are listed and explained below by name:

- **FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION:** The government may monitor religious and political institutions without suspecting criminal activity to assist in terror an investigation.

- **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION:** The government has closed once-public immigration hearings, has secretly detained hundreds of people without charges, and has encouraged bureaucrats to resist public records requests.
- **FREEDOM OF SPEECH:** The government may prosecute librarians or keepers of any other records if they tell anyone that the government subpoenaed information related to a terror investigation.
- **RIGHT TO LEGAL REPRESENTATION:** The government may monitor federal prison jailhouse conversations between attorneys and clients, and deny lawyers to Americans accused of crimes.
- **FREEDOM FROM UNREASONABLE SEARCHES:** The government may search and seize Americans' papers and effects without probable cause to assist a terror investigation.
- **RIGHT TO A SPEEDY AND PUBLIC TRIAL:** The government may jail Americans indefinitely without a trial if they are suspected of treason or terrorist activity.
- **RIGHT TO LIBERTY:** Americans may be jailed indefinitely without being charged or being able to confront witnesses against them.

This act was officially repealed in 2011 - ten years later. Regardless of its repeal, it is still unnerving to see the capability of our government when it is unchained. What can we do to protect a one such attack in the future? Speak; there is nothing more powerful than an American and his voice. Our forefathers designed our constitution so that it would not manifest itself into its English counterpart. As Thomas Jefferson said, "When governments fear the people, there is liberty. When the people fear the government, there is tyranny."