Introduction



Glover Mint: Hello, America! Welcome to WUSG News. I'm Glover Mint. This is my esteemed colleague, Demi Tracy. On today's show, we will take a look at the first ten amendments of the U.S. Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights. Constitutional scholar, Jamie Madson, joins us with his segment, *The Constitutional Connection*.



The Constitutional Connection



Jamie Madson: Welcome. I'm Jamie Madson and this is *The Constitutional Connection*. Today, we will discuss the Bill of Rights, which is an important document that was added to the U.S. Constitution to protect civil liberties and civil rights. Before we begin our discussion, it is important to clarify the difference between these two terms.



Civil Liberties vs. Civil Rights

Civil Liberties vs. Civil Rights

Civil Liberties

- A basic freedom
- Government may not infringe upon it
- The freedom of speech
- The freedom of religion

Civil Rights

- Access to fair and equal treatment under the law
- Had civil rights restricted: African Americans, women, Native Americans, etc.

Jamie Madson: These two terms may seem interchangeable, but they are actually distinct from each other. A civil liberty is a basic freedom that the government may not infringe upon. The freedom of speech and the freedom of religion are great examples of civil liberties. Civil rights refer to fair and equal treatment under the law. For example, the civil rights of women and African Americans were initially restricted in America, since these groups were treated unfairly and unequally under the law.



Bill of Rights

Bill

Bill of Rights

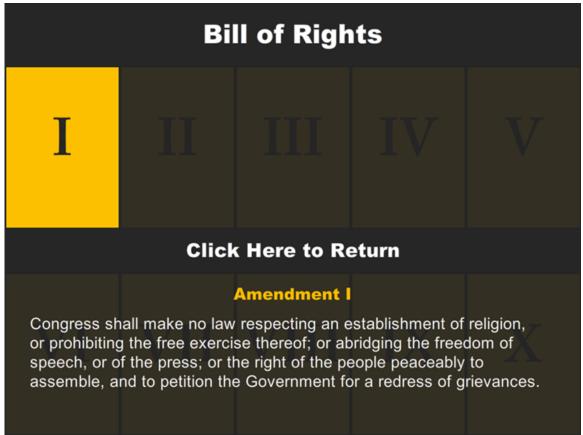
- Was drafted by James Madison
- Intended to protect individuals and states from abuse by the federal government
- Inspired by the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the English Bill of Rights, and the Magna Carta
- Congress selected ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights
- Became part of the Constitution at the end of 1791

Jamie Madson: During the process of ratification, the Virginian James Madison drafted several amendments to the Constitution in an attempt to alleviate some of the concerns of the Antifederalists. The goal of these amendments was to protect individuals and the states from abuse by the federal government. Madison's inspiration for these amendments came from several documents, such as the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the English Bill of Rights, and the Magna Carta.

After the Constitution was ratified, Congress met to debate Madison's proposals. Some of his proposals for amendments were accepted, some were altered, and others were rejected. Eventually, Congress settled on ten amendments to the Constitution, which became known as the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights was ratified by the states and became part of the Constitution at the end of 1791. Let's take a look at these first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution.



First Amendment



Jamie Madson: The First Amendment protects the freedom of religion, the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, the freedom of assembly, and the freedom to petition the government. This is perhaps the most famous amendment, and it protects many of the key civil liberties necessary for a democratic society.



Second Amendment



Jamie Madson: The Second Amendment protects the right to bear arms. Many feel that the Second Amendment grants Americans the right to own various types of firearms. Others believe that the Second Amendment was meant to protect a state's right to form a militia and has nothing to do with individual gun ownership rights. The interpretation of this amendment continues to be heavily debated.



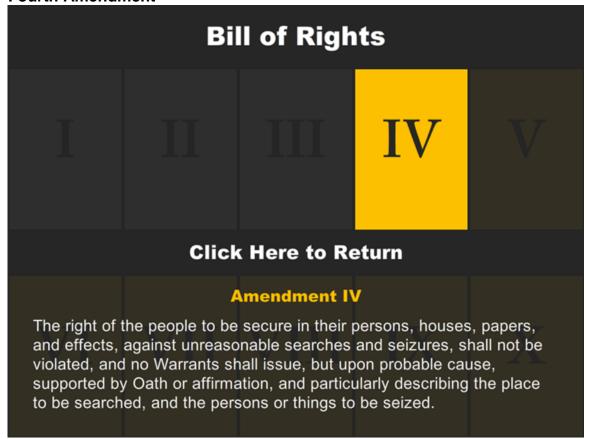
Third Amendment



Jamie Madson: The Third Amendment prevents the government from forcing the owner of a home to house troops. In colonial times, the British military would quarter troops in private homes, forcing the owners of the homes to feed and shelter the troops. Often, they received little or no compensation for quartering the troops. This was a major concern during the drafting of the Bill of Rights, but has basically become irrelevant in the modern world. The Third Amendment has never been the subject of a Supreme Court case and is mostly forgotten by Americans.



Fourth Amendment



Jamie Madson: The Fourth Amendment protects people and their property from unreasonable searches and seizures. In order for the government to legally search or seize individual persons or their property, the government must receive a court order or meet other legal requirements. Like the Third Amendment, this practice was also born of colonial frustrations. British officials could search private property at any time without probable cause. Unlike the Third Amendment, the Fourth Amendment remains an important protection against government abuse.



Fifth Amendment



Jamie Madson: The Fifth Amendment protects people who are accused of a crime. It requires indictment by a grand jury for capital crimes, and prevents people from being charged more than once for the same offense, which is known as double jeopardy. The Fifth Amendment also protects the accused from being forced to testify against themselves or from being deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law. In addition to these legal protections, the Fifth Amendment states that the government cannot confiscate private property without giving fair compensation.



Sixth Amendment



Jamie Madson: The Sixth Amendment also protects people who are accused of a crime. It requires that the accused enjoy a speedy and public trial by jury, and be told what the charges against them are. The accused also have a right to question witnesses against them, call their own witnesses, and receive legal assistance.



Seventh Amendment



Jamie Madson: The Seventh Amendment guarantees trial by jury in all civil cases tried at the federal level when they involve more than twenty dollars.



Eighth Amendment



Jamie Madson: The Eighth Amendment protects against cruel and unusual punishment, as well as excessive bail or fines. The term "cruel and unusual punishment" comes from the English Bill of Rights, and was intended to protect the accused from punishments like torture or being burned at the stake.



Ninth Amendment



Jamie Madson: The Ninth Amendment protects other rights not specifically listed in the Bill of Rights. While the Bill of Rights was being drafted, some members of Congress believed that if rights were listed individually, the federal government would protect only those rights that were specifically mentioned. This Amendment was added to ease those concerns.



Tenth Amendment



Jamie Madson: The Tenth Amendment grants the states all the powers that are not delegated to or prevented by the federal government under the U.S. Constitution.



Ending of Episode



Glover Mint: Thank you, Jamie. That's all for this episode of WUSG News. This is Demi Tracy, and I'm Glover Mint, signing off.

