The Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the Constitution, protects the rights of American citizens.

1st Amendment: Freedom to freely practice religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, right to peaceably assemble, right to petition.

2nd Amendment: Right to bear arms.

3rd Amendment: No soldier shall be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner.

4th Amendment: Forbids unreasonable search and seizure.

5th Amendment: Right to due process and protection against double jeopardy and self-incrimination.

6th Amendment: Right to a speedy trial, impartial jury, and representation by an attorney.

7th Amendment: Right to trial by jury in civil cases.

8th Amendment: No excessive fines or cruel and unusual punishment.

9th Amendment: Protection of rights not listed.

10th Amendment: Powers not granted to the government retained by the states and the people.

14th Amendment: Although it is not part of the Bill of Rights, this amendment is vitally important because it allowed the Supreme Court to apply the rights in the first ten amendments to the states. Originally, the Bill of Rights applied only to the federal government.

“WE MIGHT AS WELL REQUIRE A MAN TO WEAR STILL THE COAT WHICH FITTED HIM WHEN A BOY, AS CIVILIZED SOCIETY TO REMAIN EVER UNDER THE REGIMEN OF THEIR BARBAROUS ANCESTORS.”

— THOMAS JEFFERSON, 1816

WHAT IS INCORPORATION?
Throughout the 20th century, the Supreme Court used the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment to apply most of the Bill of Rights to the states thereby expanding the protections under the Bill of Rights—a process known as incorporation.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS AND YOU