THE BILL OF RIGHTS ALLOWS US TO PRACTICE ANY RELIGION, SPEAK FREELY, AND
MAKE A CHANGE

MARCHING AGAINST DISCRIMINATION
African-American civil rights leaders used their First Amendment rights to protest discrimination. Civil rights activists, like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., brought national attention to the discrimination of African Americans, resulting in a series of Civil Rights Acts.

PETITIONING FOR CHANGE
Americans have the right to petition, or communicate, with the government. Petitions can be signed in person. Yet today, petitioning has gone digital. You can petition online at the White House website through Whitehouse.gov. If a petition receives 100,000 signatures in 30 days, the administration will respond.

FREEDOM OF PRESS
The right to freely express, distribute, and obtain information and ideas through print and electronic media.

PROTECTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
The right to freely practice religion is an important part of American democracy. In a nation of diverse cultures, beliefs, and religions—the First Amendment ensures that each American’s beliefs are protected and that the government will not pass any law establishing a religion.

SPEAKING OUT AGAINST INEQUALITY
The Constitution did not allow women to vote until 1919. Despite this, women used their right to speak, write, and petition to advance full voting rights. These continual efforts led to the 19th Amendment, which officially changed the Constitution to provide women the ability to vote, although women of color still faced barriers to voting throughout the 100th century.

For many Americans, exercising our First Amendment rights defines what it means to be American. Americans have used the five rights protected by the First Amendment to exercise their beliefs, speak their mind, and even influence Federal law. Some of the most important changes in American history began with American citizens speaking, printing, or gathering to demand change.