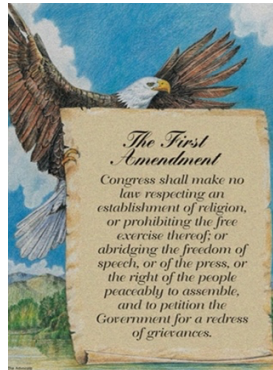




The 1st Amendment

As a youth activist, what are **your** rights?



Below is a summary of the 1st Amendment Rights of the United States Constitution but it is also important to know your rights as a student at school and/or a person with a disability. Click on to important information from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

<https://www.aclu.org/blog/juvenile-justice/student-rights-school-six-things-you-need-know>

<https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/disability-rights/#navigating-businesses-and-public-spaces-with-a-disability>

Freedom of Religion

- You have the right to freely practice whatever religion you desire. However, some religions face persecution in America, most prominently Judaism and Islam. Antisemitic and Islamophobic attitudes including the banning of religious clothing/coverings and harmful language and narratives, are something that these groups work to combat every day.

- Many black and brown youth face oppression due to their religious as well as racial identity, thus it is important to recognize the illegal harms that can occur and to recognize when your religious rights are being violated.

Freedom of Speech

- The freedom of speech means youth can freely share their truths and opinions on various issues that impact them. Youth can share in academic spaces such as school clubs, organizations, and in classroom spaces. It is also an opportunity to reach out into one's community by engaging local youth and community leaders.
- Having crucial conversations and advocating for what one believes in, is key to being a steadfast activist. By creating and utilizing spaces of discussion on social issues, you can work to create social impact and perspective changes in your respective community. This will also allow you to gain credibility as a leader and plan larger projects and activities down the line for your community.

Freedom of the Press

- Media is a powerful tool that youth can use to amplify and uplift their voices. Getting involved can range from a local scale such as writing in your school newspaper or interning for your town gazette, to sharing your stories on state or national outlets.
<https://ncac.org/news/dissent-protest-pandemic>
- Without a position of power, stories and press are how our youth get their voices heard. It is imperative to recognize that your experiences are valid and can touch and educate the lives of others.

Right to Protest

- Protesting has long been the cornerstone of movements led by our black and brown communities. While many others in the fight may not be able to physically participate, youth possess the energy and zeal to take to the streets. Organizing in this manner allows youth to demonstrate their unity for a cause and draw attention to their issues of concern.
- It is important to recognize the disparities in treatment towards different protesting groups. In summer of 2020, many peaceful protestors for the Black Lives Matter Movement experienced unprovoked violence and danger on behalf of the police and national guard. In January of 2021, however, when election protesters stormed the capitol, many were easily able to infiltrate, wave Confederate flags, and steal and break into the spaces of our nation's elected officials. Many argue that if they had been Black Lives Matter protesters, the treatment they received would have been incredibly harsher.

Right to Petition the Government

- Our government's purpose is to represent its citizens, thus petitioning our local officials is another crucial tool for change. Youth can present to their local town councils, write to senators or representatives or draft petitions to get larger national attention. You can use this tool to find your local and national representatives

<https://myreps.datamade.us/>

- When youth work together to present their demands to our government, we can see fundamental legal and procedural changes.
- See how youth are using their voices

<https://engage.youth.gov/>

Youth with disabilities:

<https://engage.youth.gov/topics/disabilities>