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**Americans’ right to assembly has allowed us to thrive**

The First Amendment is one of the most recognizable and important amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The rights to freely express speech and religion, petition the government and use the press are guaranteed in the First Amendment, but the right to freely assemble is one of the most important and forgotten on this list. Why is this such an important addition to the Constitution, and why is it taken for granted?

Currently, in my ninth-grade American History class, we are learning about the American Revolution. During this time, Boston, Massachusetts was an area that was strongly against British rule. The colony had limited ways to communicate within, so town meetings were very common. These meetings were used to help organize protests, against unfair taxation, like the Stamp Act, and Townshend Acts. While the Stamp Act was nullified because of the colony's protests, British Parliament sent two army regiments to control Boston’s behavior. Like before, the Colonists protested, but it wasn’t enough. The outraged citizens had enough of the unfair British control, so they called a town meeting where it was decided; The Sons of Liberty dumped thousands of pounds worth of tea into the Boston Harbor, in an event now known as the Boston Tea Party.

Following the Boston Tea Party, Parliament created the Intolerable Acts. These acts shut down the harbor, effectively killing the Boston economy. They allowed for the unfair trial of British officers in a biased British court and established the Quartering Act that forced any colonist to house and feed officers at their expense. But most importantly, they instituted the Massachusetts Government Act, which stripped Boston of its local government and required any town meeting subject to approval. In response to these egregious acts, 56 delegates from 12 colonies assembled in the First Continental Congress. This Congress sent a petition to the King of England, listing grievances and calling for a boycott of British goods.

The King denied the colonist's first attempt at a peaceful resolution, so colonists in Lexington and Concord took up arms and fought the tyranny themselves. After successfully defending the British, colonists fought at the land route into Boston, Bunker Hill, gaining a morale boost in a hard-fought loss. Despite the loss at Bunker Hill in March of 1776, Boston was freed of British control. On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress assembled and approved independence from Great Britain, officially adopting the Declaration of Independence on July Fourth.

In today’s day and age, we take for granted not only the hard-earned sacrifice these men, paid with the most important piece, their lives, but also the freedom to assemble that began with this nation’s humble beginnings of farmers and businessmen fighting for our independence, and the rights so important to them. It is because of the freedom to assemble that the Boston Colony was able to express their thoughts on the unfair British rule, the First and Second Continental Congress was able to petition the king, and we can thrive.