

The Importance of the First Amendment 232 Years Later

Despite the Constitutional Amendments, specifically the First Amendment which shapes our daily lives, many US citizens never think about it and take it for granted. Reading books, talking politics, attending church, protesting, and petitioning for changes are all things the First Amendment protects. This is not a universal concept though. There are many people who still live in areas without the benefits allowed by the First Amendment. Only 43% of countries were considered to have free expression by the Freedom House, a non profit organization, in the world index. We must remember the importance of the First Amendment to understand the lives of others living under different rules and to be more open-minded when meeting them. Despite the creation of it hundreds of years ago, it still holds importance in the present world. And we need to see it as such. As George Washington famously said, "If freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter."

1st Place – Nicolas Giang - Waunakee Community Middle School, Waunakee - 8th grade