
A Comparison Between Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Everybody has heard of the Bill of Rights. Free speech, religion, assembly, right to bear arms, right to a fair and speedy trial, etc.... These are what is known as civil liberties. These were created to appease the state's worries over a federal government who would trample over all the citizens of the country. While the Constitution is made of the lists of do's for Congress, the Bill of Rights is a list of do-not's.

Civil rights, on the other hand, is the right to be free from discrimination regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, gender, and/or sexual preference. It's the reason that business owners are not allowed to fire someone, just because of their skin color or the fact that they identify as homosexual.

When people are talking about what they have the right to do, they are talking about their liberties. When they are talking about their right to equal treatment, then they are talking about their civil rights. They are similar but they are fundamentally different in the fact of when they came from. Civil rights really didn't start coming around until the 1950s, during the Civil Rights movement, whereas our civil liberties were applied soon after the Constitution was written, in the 1790s. Of course, when they first came out, these liberties were only applied to you if you were an adult white male, so you were out of luck if you were female, black, and or a child.

In any way that you may look at this, these civil rights and liberties are dependent on each other. Without civil liberties, your civil rights would be leading to basically nothing, and without civil rights, you may not be "eligible" for those civil liberties if the government so chooses.

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