
Civil Rights Vs Civil Liberties

Civil liberties and civil rights are mechanical components that have influence on the way we live our lives. Each category can be applied in different situations, to identify different experiences for each individual. People in the US, for instance, have started to question whether democracy is worth fighting for as more instances are identified in which human beings find themselves, above the law. Civil liberties are viewed as basic rights and freedoms that are guaranteed. Either written within the bill of rights or the U.S. Constitution. They were intended to protect freedoms that governments may not legally intrude on. For example, the First Amendment denies the government the power to prohibit “the free exercise” of religion and that the states and the national government cannot forbid people to follow a religion of their choice, even if politicians and judges think the religion is imprudent, blasphemous, inappropriate, etc.

You are free to create your own religion and have a following, even if both government and societal organizations disapprove of its views. We’ve seen the supreme court get involved in cases where civil liberties are violated. Lemon v. Kurtzman, for instance, claimed that Rhode Island and Pennsylvanian governments provided public funding for catholic schools in the time. The supreme court justice upheld the law and stated that governments cannot foster excessive government entanglement with religion. This being said, the way one practices their religion may be regulated if it interferes with the rights of others. Civil rights, on the other hand, are guarantees that government officials must treat people equally and that the decisions will be made on a basis of merit rather than a basis of race, gender, or other personal characteristics. Because of the Constitution’s civil rights guarantee, it is unlawful and unethical for a state run university to treat students differently based on their race, ethnicity, age, sex, etc. In the 1960s, many states had segregated schools where only students of a certain race or gender were able to study. However, the supreme court ruled that these policies violated the civil rights of students who could not be admitted because of those rules.

Thomas Jefferson wrote “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”, in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, but his view of equality was vastly different from our own. Still, the Founding Fathers fought to create an equal society, in which Americans were free from restrictions on their individual liberties. The civil rights movement of the 1950’s erupted when African Americans demanded that equal protection under the law be given to them. Their actions set the stage for other groups to begin demands for new laws as well.

In our nation today, such freedoms such as the right to privacy and freedom of speech for granted. But our civil liberties and rights are the result of many years of activism and perseverance. Plus, our conceptions of civil rights and liberties have evolved since Jefferson’s

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time. Recent events like same-sex marriage and gun laws ensure that our conceptions of liberty and equal rights will continue to evolve in the years to come.

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