

Abstract

As the title suggests, this thesis is about the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and about development of its interpretation from its inception to present day. Over the years, the interpretation of the First Amendment has drastically changed, causing a shift from restrictive views on free expression towards almost absolute freedom. Today, freedom of expression and religious freedom, both of which are included in the First Amendment, play a significant role in preserving democracy while strengthening its core pillars not only in the United States, but in other modern nations as well. The inclusion of the First Amendment into the world's oldest written constitution has influenced the concept of free expression and religious freedom in the laws of many foreign countries. According to some scholars, the current level of constitutional protection guaranteed for free expression in United States is too high and does not correlate with what the framers of the constitution had intended on upon drafting the First Amendment. However, it comes as no surprise that higher standards of protection from governmental intervention regarding guaranteed freedom in the First Amendment consequently results in the betterment of society.

Throughout the text, I will aim to answer every major question concerning the origin, evolution and current state of all the rights and freedoms protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. In order to accomplish this, I relied heavily on the case law of the Supreme Court of the United States as well as various publications containing information about the First Amendment law. I employed a comprehensive approach as opposed to analyzing distinct cases due to the sheer volume of First Amendment jurisprudence, making it fairly unfeasible to intricately examine all of the distinct issues arising from the First Amendment. In conclusion, this text is best suited as an introduction to the First Amendment law or as an outline for further research focused on specific areas of the First Amendment Law.