

# Civil Rights and Liberties Overview

## Constitution Review

The founders of the Constitution created the Constitution to benefit the \_\_\_\_\_ for generations to come and to limit the powers of the \_\_\_\_\_.

### Review the Constitutional Principles

*(participate in matching with LIVE or replay)*

## Civil Liberties and Rights

### What exactly ARE civil liberties and rights?

- Civil \_\_\_\_\_ are the rights and freedoms GUARANTEED by the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, and interpreted through laws passed by elected officials and decisions made by the Supreme Court.
- Civil \_\_\_\_\_ are legal rights that keep people and groups free from discrimination.

*There are three important ideas to keep in mind about the liberties and rights contained in the Constitution:*

## Important Idea #1

Constitutional rights cannot and are not always be absolute; there are \_\_\_\_\_ to them.

*Example: a person cannot publish lies that destroy another person's reputation (\_\_\_\_\_) and claim that the right to free speech protects him or her from a lawsuit*

## Important Idea #2

The Constitution protects people from actions of the \_\_\_\_\_, not from actions taken by \_\_\_\_\_ individuals or groups.

*Example: while a police officer (as an agent of the government) cannot search your bedroom for drugs without a warrant, your \_\_\_\_\_ still can.*

## Important Idea #3

Many state and local governments have laws to protect civil liberties. These laws can be more protective of liberties and rights than the U.S. Constitution, but they may not be \_\_\_\_\_ protective. This idea is known as the “constitutional \_\_\_\_\_” because it represents the lowest possible protection. States can go higher than the floor, but not lower.

*Example: while the federal laws have not specified that people who are homosexual are protected from housing and employment discrimination, many city/state governments have passed laws protecting them.*

## Reflection

In your own words, what are civil rights and liberties?

Why did the founding fathers think it was important to protect the civil liberties and rights in the constitution?