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A Moment of Reflection for Bill of Rights Day: We're Screwed

Brian Doherty | December 15, 2009

Tim Lynch at Cato pisses in our cornflakes on the morning of Bill of Rights day with his sad but true reflection on the state of our constitutional rights. Some excerpts:

The First Amendment says that Congress “shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech.” Government officials, however, insist that they can make it a crime to mention the name of a political candidate in an ad in the weeks preceding an election. They also insist upon gag orders in thousands of federal investigations.

The Second Amendment says the people have the right “to keep and bear arms.” Government officials, however, insist that they can make it a crime to keep and bear arms....

The Fourth Amendment says the people have the right to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures. Government officials, however, insist that they can storm into homes in the middle of the night after giving residents a few seconds to answer their “knock” on the door.

The Fifth Amendment says that private property shall not be taken “for a public use without just compensation.” Government officials, however, insist that they can take away our property and give it to others who covet it....

The Eighth Amendment prohibits cruel and unusual punishments. Government officials, however, insist that jailing people who try to ingest a life-saving drug is not cruel.

The Ninth Amendment says that the enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights should not be construed to deny or disparage others “retained by the people.” Government officials, however, insist that they will decide for themselves what rights, if any, will be retained by the people.

The Tenth Amendment says that the powers not delegated to the federal government are to be reserved to the states, or to the people. Government officials, however, insist that they will decide for themselves what powers are reserved to the states, or to the people.

Happy Bill of Rights Day, everyone! Yet another ironic legacy of FDR, by the way.