

Writing Activity 2 - "Is there, in all republics, this inherent and fatal weakness?"

In every form of structured government, the party that possesses more power over rights and liberties, whether it be the citizens or the government, controls the way in which the nation functions. An integral component to this issue is the balance between citizens' rights and the power of the government, particularly in ensuring the safety of the people. If the citizens of the nation possess unrestricted rights and liberties, there lies the possibility of a chaotic and anarchic society in which the citizens possess too much power. A common example of this scenario can be found when discussing the first amendment. If no limitations or restrictions are established on the subject of the freedom of speech, someone could yell "fire" in a theater, risking many lives in the process. With the addition of certain stipulations to this amendment, situations such as these can be avoided. In this case, the protection of citizens' lives is more important than the protection of their rights.

On the contrary, a government that possesses ultimate control of the rights and liberties of its citizens can achieve any of its goals if it is willing to violate its citizens. This scenario is obviously just as undesirable as the first, because in both situations either party has too much power. Thus, a conflict between the citizens' rights and the government's power arises and the situations in which the government should and shouldn't have the ability to take away certain rights must be determined.

This leads one believe that a balance between complete government control and complete citizen freedom must be established. With this balance in mind, there are many situations by which the government is obligated to limit citizens' rights in order to protect citizens, sacrificing their freedom for security. Arguably, by choosing to be a part of cyberspace, one has already given up some of his rights due to the public nature of the cyber world. In many situations, life takes precedence over all things, including rights; therefore, the sacrifice of freedom for security is justified. For example, the government may spy on citizens of the United States to prevent crime or wrongdoing. The government's aspirations often clash with the rights of U.S. citizens, especially with regards to cyberspace.

However, there are instances in which certain rights should be inviolable and must not be infringed upon by the government. As the declaration of independence states: "...certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness – that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men."¹ Our government was instituted to secure and protect these three inviolable rights as well as other things, and this passage clearly states. These indispensable rights paved the way for other rights that came after them, making them extremely important.

¹ *The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America*, page 9

In conclusion, while certain rights should be free of infringement from the government, basic rights such as liberty and the pursuit of happiness are arguably as important of life itself. Lastly, the right of privacy can be broken by the government, but must be backed up by considerable, and trustworthy reasoning.