This country was created on the grounds that every man is created equal, meaning that no other man should have more liberties or power than any another. The government has the immensely important task of being responsible for mutually upholding the rights of citizens and national security, but sometimes the government can infringe upon the inalienable rights of the American citizens.

In addition to protecting us from both foreign and domestic affairs, the government has the obligation to protect the rights of the citizens as the first amendment states, “Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise or abridging the freedom of speech.” These two issues of civil rights and national security show a division in values about whether or not security is more important than freedom of speech. For example, if an American citizen posts a distasteful message about the government online, the government should not be able to censor or remove it. To avoid upholding the rights of citizens would be an affront to the founding fathers and would damage the integrity of our governmental system as a whole. It is an unfortunate reality that our government sometimes takes it upon itself to forgo our civil liberties for the sake of its own interests.

The government sacrifices certain rights of the people mostly when it involves act of terrorism. Tragedies such as 9/11 can obscure the line between governmental rule and infringement of civil rights. After 9/11, the government implemented the Patriot Act, which means that the government can spy or tap anyone’s information such as e-mail or telephone. This can be seen as a necessity in the case of national security, but it can also be seen as an illegal search and seizure which violates the fourth amendment. To become bold, conscientious citizens is the only way to preserve the vitality of the American people and prevent the abuse of power.

Despite the fact that the government may feel it is its duty to do away with rights that interfere with its national security, there are some rights that are indispensable to humans. Rights that the government should never infringe upon are the freedom of speech, press, and religion. Being able to freely express and spread ideas and practice religion is central to our humanity. Cyber journalism is an expression of both freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The amount of sources that are available can vastly improve the accuracy of information and extend its reach. Conversely, if government officials were allowed to interfere with the first amendment, there would be an unleashing of propaganda and censored information on society instead of truth, which is an undeniable right to humans.

National security, while important, can sometimes start to have a negative effect on our rights, but citizens should not be denied fundamental freedoms that every human should be granted. Thomas Jefferson said over 200 years ago, “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” which is a symbol that makes America one of a kind.