

The right to marital privacy. The right to cyber privacy. The right to make your own health care decisions. Each of these personal liberties define our everyday life and have evolved alongside our great country. How can we be sure that these freedoms continue to be protected, seeing as they are not specifically enumerated in the Bill of Rights? How can we feel comfortable carrying on our family name to future generations that will be faced with unfathomable problems? The answer to both of these questions lies in a frequently forgotten amendment and the one that means the most to me- the Ninth Amendment.

In official terms, the Ninth Amendment ensures that explicitly stated coverage in the first amendments “shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people” (“Ninth Amendment”) and has since been clarified to ensure that citizens’ rights are not limited to the narrow constraints of ten clauses written hundreds of years ago. It has been used as support in numerous cases, including the landmark case *Griswold vs. Connecticut*. This case set the precedent that our rights as citizens can be maintained “without having to ground it in a specific constitutional amendment” (McBride). In layman’s terms, this means that Constitutional validation for policies does not have to be tied to a numbered amendment. If any given society in any given period of United States

History decides that something demands government protection, we can look to the Ninth Amendment to secure these protections. This is an invaluable contribution to our Constitution. Our founding fathers could not possibly have been granted the foresight to imagine a world in which people across the globe could be reached with the click of a button or where fatal illnesses have promising, yet experimental, treatments. Luckily, they did have the foresight to realize that America was never destined to be a static nation. It was sure to innovate and evolve. In this way, the Ninth Amendment is like the Elastic Clause of the Bill of Rights. Similar to how the framers hoped to give Congress the power to “pass all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the enumerated list of powers” (“Elastic Clause”), the Ninth Amendment ensures that citizens are granted rights that are necessary and proper for the highest enjoyment of life and liberty.

Because of its broad and elastic nature, I know I will never question whether or not I am protected by the Constitution- whether or not something falls into one of the other amendments. The Ninth Amendment covers citizens on all angles. While blatant protections of “religion, expression, assembly, [speech], and the right to petition” (“First Amendment”) and the right to bear arms allows me to feel secure in our country on a day to day basis, I recognize that other problems may arise

where my rights may be called into question. Should this situation ever arise, I know I can call on the Ninth Amendment to remind those against me that I am protected beyond what the nearly 500 (Madison) words in the Bill of Rights can convey.

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