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“They who would give up an essential liberty for contemporary security, deserve neither liberty or security,” asserted Benjamin Franklin during multiple tumultuous periods well before the American Revolution. At hand was the question of whether or not the colonies should permit *any* form of violating what they held to be their rights. This was a popular phrase used over two centuries ago, but Franklin’s statement should guide American mindset today<sup>1</sup>.

Essential liberties are those that all human beings have and have lost much blood to gain. Freedoms do not come cheap. While they were definitely not enforced in most of the world, America was correct in making sure its people would live secure lives and potentially thrive. Britain had imposed several unsavory policies on the colonies that were designed merely as ways to maintain safety and prosperity within the empire, but it was these recent conditionings that agitated the Revolution to come. The mistreatments forced upon America were infinitesimal, but revolutionaries foresaw that a small forfeit here-and-there could easily develop into major abuse in a short period of time. Influential men like Benjamin Franklin had to resurrect radical statements like this one to help the Commoners realize the severity of the time<sup>1</sup>.

America had a nationalist cause. The colonies were going to break away from an uncompassionate England; however, there were many colonists who kept faith in the Crown even into the war. They were willing to suffer various dubious actions, as long as Britain maintained that what it did was for the general good. The Loyalists, credulously believing that their government was a perfect institution, had a mentality detrimental to protecting necessary freedoms. The divide really hit home: Benjamin Franklin’s own son William was a Tory, supporting the empire’s plans and values<sup>2</sup>. Franklin stuck with his position despite this, showing that the issue was too important to yield on.

Today in the United States, men and women are not afraid to declare or practice their religious standing. Citizens can speak out against government officials freely. An understood social contract between inhabitants and the government is constantly functioning. So many *other* liberties are set up and used at every moment. America has recognized certain rights, like these, as deserved by all human beings and will not trespass against them. Sometimes these liberties hinder government proceedings, which even might have been meant to benefit only US citizens. If those certain ‘troublesome’ liberties could be suspended for but a short period, America could reach their goal<sup>3</sup>, but even then their liberties are upheld. Another conundrum is if newspapers, which rallied negative sentiment against certain government actions, would be banned to print such material; opposition would decrease due to the inevitable rise in ignorance. The government could then do whatever it desired without fear of being monitored. People would not be aware, nor could they get organized to support offset checks and balances.

<sup>1</sup> [UShistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org/franklin/quotable/quote04.htm). “The Electric Ben Franklin.” 1999-2008. Independence Hall Association. 6 Oct. 2008 <<http://www.ushistory.org/franklin/quotable/quote04.htm>>.

<sup>2</sup> [AmericanRevolution.com](http://www.americanrevolution.com/). “American Revolution - The Complete History.” 2006. Americans.net. 7 Oct. 2008 <<http://www.americanrevolution.com/>>.

<sup>3</sup> Whether it is migrant workers from Mexico or even Guantanamo Bay prisoners, America knows all men have rights, and those rights have to be protected.

<sup>4</sup> [USINFO.STATE.GOV](http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem/whatdm3.htm). “Inalienable Rights.” U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Information Programs. 13 Oct. 2008 <<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem/whatdm3.htm>>.

The lack of information would leave potential readers ignorant of critical details. To reach its goal, the government and special interest groups are capable of stripping citizens of their unalienable rights<sup>4</sup>. If we pick and choose the occasion to apply these liberties, we run the risk of eventually losing them all. While this is the usual routine in other countries even unto this day, Americans have worked to affirm that a violation like this would not legally take place.

Freedom has to literally be fought for on each day. American soldiers and others on the battlefield have died, are dying, and most likely *will* die to ensure that other Americans keep their freedoms. Relieving someone of his rights could always benefit those in charge. It would be easy to abuse a lax citizen's gullibility, in order to gain control. Although these citizens usually have the best intentions, they can actually get everyone harmed, including opponents considered to be more cynical.

The experienced leaders of our nation, technically taking the niche of men like Benjamin Franklin, need to remind us daily that they are human too. It is our duty to question our government everyday. We must close our eyes and look into the eyes of our blood stained Patriots of old, and realize that the loss of the Freedoms we enjoy can be lost in a moment, and we should 'never give an inch' to contemporary security.

## **Bibliography**

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