

## Excerpts from the English Bill of Rights

1689

This document was an act of Parliament that guaranteed the right of British subjects to petition the king and to bear arms, and also prohibited excessive bails and fines and cruel and unusual punishment. This document became part of the British Constitution, and also set a precedent upon which Enlightenment philosophers.

“That it is the right of the subjects to petition the king, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal;

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That election of members of Parliament ought to be free;

That the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament;

That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted;

That jurors ought to be duly impanelled and returned, and jurors which pass upon men in trials for high treason ought to be freeholders;

That all grants and promises of fines and forfeitures of particular persons before conviction are illegal and void;

And that for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently.”

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