

Bill of Rights Scenarios: Merit

Instructions: Read the following real-life situations. Then identify the amendment addressed in each situation, explain how the amendment is linked to the situation, and answer any further questions in each paragraph. (Most of these ask for your opinion. Please give me a reason for your opinion, but be brief.)

1. In June 2002, the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the phrase “under God” as written and spoken when saying The Pledge of Allegiance was unconstitutional. ***Why? (Identify the amendment that the Court could use as support for its ruling and how it supports the Court’s ruling.) What is your opinion – is this phrase constitutional or not? Support your opinion.**

2. On December 18, 1791, a 12-year old Philadelphia apprentice, Dillon, was arrested for burning down several stables containing hay and other goods. He was told by his minister, his boss and others to confess for the good of his “mortal body and soul,” but he insisted he was innocent. He was then taken to the dungeon where he was shown the gloom and horror of what would befall him if he did not confess. He was told he would be confined in this dark and cold dungeon with little food, but if he confessed, he would be well accommodated with room, fire, and food and may expect to receive pity and favor from the court. Dillon continued to assert his innocence, but after he was kept in the dungeon for two days without heat, food, or water, he confessed. ***Dillon’s attorney said this confession was unreliable and illegal. Why? (Identify the amendment that would support the attorney’s opinion and how.) What do you think?**

3. In 1770, and then again in 1773, the king of England passed a Quartering Act, which required the colonists in America to house and feed soldiers of the Royal Army. After the Bill of Rights was passed, **do Americans still have to house soldiers if the president says so? Why or why not? (No opinion necessary on this one.)**