



Those who hoped that the change promised by candidate Barack Obama would include repeal of the various acts that have stripped Americans of their constitutional rights should be disappointed. Benjamin Franklin supposedly wrote, "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." The citation is likely apocryphal, at least in terms of its attribution to Franklin, but it is useful shorthand for the unfortunate abandonment of many of the liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution as a consequence of 9/11. The trauma of 9/11 created an opportunity for those seeking to centralize executive power, an objective of recent presidents from both political parties. Many Americans initially accepted that there had to be some abridgment of fundamental liberties while fighting a multi-faceted and unconventional war against terrorism, but few realize just how much the constitutional rights that all citizens take for granted have been eroded. History also teaches us that once a right is suspended, in all likelihood it is gone forever.

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