



Bill of Rights: Parliament Limits the Power of the Monarchy

Before Parliament allowed William and Mary to be crowned, the new monarchs had to accept certain limitations on the power of the monarchy. In 1689,

Parliament passed and William and Mary accepted what has become known as the English Bill of Rights. Among its provisions are the following:

- The suspension of laws by the monarchy “without the consent of Parliament is illegal.”
- “That levying money for . . . the use of the Crown . . . without grant of Parliament . . . is illegal.”
- That the people have the right to petition the government and “prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.”
- “That the raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with consent of Parliament is against [the] law.”
- “That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.”
- “That . . . for the amending, strengthening and preserving of the laws, [sessions of] Parliaments ought to be held frequently.”

The Glorious Revolution and the English Bill of Rights were important landmarks on the road to limited monarchy. Several important philosophical ideas that were used to justify the Revolution and write the Bill of Rights came from the contemporary philosopher John Locke, whose ideas on natural law and the limitations of governmental power profoundly influenced the leaders of the American Revolution ninety years later.