1St Amendment Essay, Research Paper

HE FIRST AMENDMENT “Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or

prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the

government for a redress of grievances.” What exactly are the limits to free speech, anyway? This amendment

forbids the government from making any law that prohibits it. The debate against this will rage on forever, even

judges can’t agree. One of the big things that cause argument is people suing publishers and editors for all kinds

of things. We need to remind these folks that the First Amendment is a man-made law, not something that is

God-made and perfect in all situations, it does have it’s limits. Our founding fathers wouldn’t mind if we drew the

line at a book that gives instructions on how to commit murder. There have been many songs that talk about

violence against the police. A man from Texas claimed that the lyrics from Tupac Shakur’s “2Pacalypse Now”

inspired him to murder a deputy sheriff. But Tupac’s song wasn’t a how-to on killing police, with explicit

instructions. There is a thick line that falls between a work of art that depicts or describes an act of violence and

a book that gives advice on murder. Anyone with even a shred of common sense knows that you can’t say or

write anything about any subject at any time you please. That’s why newspapers and magazines across the

country go through a self-censorship process that’s stricter than any amendment would impose. Unlike some

people, most editors and publishers know that the First Amendment’s forbidding government from making a new

law impinging on freedom of speech doesn’t mean that private individuals can’t sue you. One judge might throw

their cases out, another might rule for the bailiffs. Printing something that’s simply offensive may be protected

under our Bill of Rights. But that has never stopped individuals from suing them. I saw keep on, if the congress

feels that strongly about our rights, so be it. But we need more people to stop them from getting out of hand.