**LAW CLASS**

**The Fourth Amendment**

The Fourth Amendment states:

*“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized*.”

Vocabulary

Secure: safe

Unreasonable: without making sense

Probable: likely

Affirmation: permission

**A Guide to the Fourth Amendment**

The Fourth Amendment, or Amendment IV of the United States Constitution is the section of the Bill of Rights that protects people from being searched or having their things taken away from them without any good reason. If the government or any law enforcement official wants to do that, he or she must have a very good reason to do that and must get permission to perform the search from a judge.

**History of the Third Amendment**

In Colonial America, laws were written in order to help the English earn money on customs (taxes on good brought into the country). Some of the coonists were bringing goods into the country without paying these taxes.

The justices would writing general warrants, which allowed search and seizure to happen. These general warrants allowed any messenger or officer to search a suspected place without any evidence. It also allowed them to seize people without even saying what they did wrong or showing evidence of their wrongdoings. These actions later led to the addition of the Fourth Amendment in the Bill of Rights.

**The Fourth Amendment Today**

Today, the Fourth Amendment means that in order for a police officer to search and arrest someone, he or she will need to get permission or a warrant to do so from a judge. In order to get a warrant, the police officer must have evidence or probable cause that supports it. The police officer, or whoever has the evidence, must swear that it is true to his or her knowledge.

**Facts About the Fourth Amendment**

* The Fourth Amendment applies to the government, but not any searches done by organizations or people who are not doing it for the government.
* Some searches can be done without a warrant without breaking the law, like when there is a good reason to think that a crime is happening.

Questions to Consider:

1. Under what circumstances can a government official search your home?
2. Why was it necessary for the British to search colonial homes?
3. How did colonist feel about these laws?
4. What must police do to get a warrant?
5. When can you or your home be searched without your permission?