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The Right to Clean Air: A Needed Addition to the U.S. Bill of Rights

In many countries, citizens have the right to a healthy environment, including clean air. For example, France's Constitution guarantees the right to live in a healthy environment. I believe this right should be added to the U.S. Bill of Rights because clean air is essential for our health, economy, and the future of our planet.

Air pollution is a serious health issue in the United States. According to the American Lung Association, over 4 in 10 Americans live in areas with unhealthy air. This pollution can lead to asthma, lung disease, and heart problems. When people breathe in dirty air, it affects their overall health and well-being. By recognizing a right to clean air, we ensure that everyone can enjoy a healthier life.

The economic costs of air pollution are staggering. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that air pollution costs the U.S. economy about \$131 billion each year in healthcare expenses and lost productivity. Adding the right to clean air could encourage businesses to adopt cleaner technologies, creating jobs in green industries and benefiting both the environment and the economy.

Air quality is closely linked to climate change, one of the biggest challenges we face today. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) states that burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gasses that contribute to climate change and degrade air quality. By adding the right to clean air to the Bill of Rights, we encourage policies that protect our environment and help combat climate change for future generations.

In conclusion, the right to clean air is vital for our health, our economy, and our planet's future. This right would serve as a powerful tool for advocacy, ensuring that all Americans can live in a clean and healthy environment. By adding this right to the U.S. Bill of Rights, we take an important step toward a healthier and more sustainable future for everyone.

Sources:

American Lung Association. "State of the Air 2023." American Lung Association.

Environmental Protection Agency. "The Cost of Air Pollution." EPA.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "Climate Change and Air Quality." NOAA.