With First Amendment rights being as natural to Americans as breathing air, some argue that citizens take these privileges for granted. These five Boone County residents are examples of people who don’t.

**Assembly**

When Ellen Wolfe joined a handful of Harg residents around a kitchen table in the fall, they didn’t plan to pet the City Council from voting an annexation and development proposed from Billy Spag. They only wanted someone to listen to their concerns about how the project would affect their backyard. But the kitchen crew eventually grew to more than 20 residents. Today, the Harg residents collected enough signatures from Columbia residents to stop the City Council from voting to annex the neighborhood.

“I always had this feeling that if we didn’t stand up for what we believed in, we’d lose,” Wolfe said. “I decided to step up.”

**Petition**

“I want to be able to have that freedom, to say ‘Hey, that’s not right,’” Jordan said.

The ability to protest in such a strong fashion, Jordan said, was the catalyst for his protests. “I needed to be visible, to be a voice for myself and my family,” he said.

**Press**

“I think the most I can do is engage people in conversation,” Waters said. “I think the most I can do is engage people in conversation.”

Waters’ editorials total more than 14,000 during his nearly 40-year tenure at the Tribune. Through the years, he has developed a clear political philosophy, but too much dogmatism isn’t good.”

“Waters was the Tribune and the Tribune was Waters. When you have someone who’s as vocal as he is, they’re not going to be silent.”

**Religion**

In 1999, Falun Gong was outlawed in China. Zhuang, a human rights activist who fled to Missouri, feels the same way about Falun Gong as she does about her native country of China. She was cautious not to deceive by communist propaganda.

Zhuang said Falun Gong, a religion that emphasizes truth, compassion and tolerance, is illegal in her native country of China. She was cautious not to be deceived by communist propaganda.

“I’d never been so scared in my life,” Jordan said. “Standing outside the Columbia Police Department and the Boone County Courthouse, Jordan, 41, began donning the hood, which he considers a symbol of terrorism, in early 2004 to protest racial profiling. Although he had protested before, this time was different. He had to be careful. Officers were frequenting his residence to search for him.

“I thought it was a victim of racial profiling, and I wanted to make a protest against the Constitution, especially the rights protected by the First Amendment,” he said. “I never thought I would be able to hold the American flag for fear of persecution.”

**With democracies come responsibilities.**