**Sedition Act – 1798**

**SECTION 1.** *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled*. That if any persons shall unlawfully combine or conspire together, with intent to oppose any measure or measures of the government of the United States, or to impede the operation of any law of the United States, or to intimidate or prevent any person holding a place or office in or under the government of the United States, from undertaking, performing, or executing his trust or duty: and if any person or persons, with intent as aforesaid, shall counsel, advise, or attempt to procure any insurrection, riot, unlawful assembly, or combination, whether such conspiracy, threatening, counsel, advice, or attempt shall have the proposed effect or not, he or they shall be deemed guilty of a high misdemeanour, and on conviction, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, and by imprisonment during a term of not less than six months, nor exceeding five years.

 *Definitions***:**

 **Conspire**: to make secret plans to commit a harmful action

**Impede**: to obstructs progress

 **Procure**: to obtain

 Questions:

1. In your own words, summarize what this section is making illegal

**SECT. 2.** *And be it further enacted*, That if any person shall write, print, utter, or publish, or shall cause or procure to be written, printed, uttered, or published, or shall knowingly and willingly assist or aid in writing, printing, uttering, or publishing any false, scandalous and malicious writing or writings against the government of the United States, with intent to defame the said government, or to bring them, or either of them, into contempt or disrepute; or to excite against them, or either or any of them, the hatred of the good people of the United States, or to stir up sedition within the United States; or to excite any unlawful combinations therein, for opposing or resisting any law of the United States, or any act of the President of the United States, or to resist, oppose, or defeat any such law or act; or to aid, encourage or abet any hostile designs of any foreign nation against the United States, their people or government, then such person, being thereof convicted before any court of the United States, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars, and by imprisonment not exceeding two years.

 *Definitions*:

 **Malicious**: vicious or intending harm

 **Disrepute**: to be not well liked

 **Sedition**: conduct or speech that encourages people to rebel against authority

 *Questions*:

1. In your own words, what do the first few lines prohibit Americans from doing?

*Questions*:

1. What rights are being violated by this act (be as specific as possible)?
2. What are some reasons why the government would want to make such a law?
3. Do you think that this act is a good or bad thing? Support your answer