

While the impulse to control large groupings of individuals by limiting their ability to organize understandable, achieving this goal through communications disruptions is not an appropriate solution. As a citizen whose sole method of voice communication is via cellular access the actions taken by BART are the equivalent of the phone company disabling telephones throughout a neighborhood because there are some concerned with a potential party at a neighbor's house. While disabling the phones *may* prevent the party there is no guarantee – additionally if anyone needs to make a call for any reason mundane or emergency they are prevented from doing so even if they are not associated with the party or any of the individuals potentially attending the party. The potential benefits are outweighed by the potential negatives.

What is even more alarming in BART's decision to exercise this authority is the context. This shutdown was not put in place due to a national security threat or actionable evidence of possible violent activity. This disruption was used to prevent a protest. Protests have long been at the heart of free speech and citizenship in the United States – inconvenience caused by protests is not an appropriate reason to infringe upon or diminish access to basic or essential services.

The actions taken by BART were wrong. At the very least approval for the shutdown should have to be granted by a court much in the same way that officers of the law are issued warrants in order to carefully safeguard the liberty of the individual.