

Class Activity 1 – Private right to freedom of speech versus public good:

In July 2011, activists shut down a San Francisco subway station as a way of protesting the death of a drunk man shot by a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police officer. A month later, the subway system blocked cell phone service at several stations in an effort to prevent another protest. According to BART officials, protesters have said they “would use mobile devices to coordinate their disruptive activities and communicate about the location and number of BART Police”. The agency said, “A civil disturbance during commute times at busy downtown San Francisco stations could lead to platform overcrowding and unsafe conditions for BART commuters, employees, and demonstrators.”

Was BART justified in blocking cell phone service?