

Rally set to protest expected T searches

OPPONENTS OF the MBTA's random inspection policy of riders during the Democratic National Convention planned to rally outside Park Street station Tuesday morning, one day after the MBTA kicked off its public education campaign about convention security.

"We're against the notion of these searches, being a gross violation of Fourth Amendment rights, in the name of pretend security," said Nancy Murray, director of the Bill of Rights Education Project at the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts.

The T has announced a heightened level of security from now through the convention, according to MBTA spokesman Joe Pesaturo. The MBTA will begin random security screenings of bags, parcels and other carry-on items by electronic equipment, explosive detection K-9s or visual inspections. Those who refuse to be screened will not be allowed to enter the T.

Murray says the screenings will not prevent terrorists activities on the T



AP PHOTO

FERESHTEH TOOSI of Somerville (right) offers tea bags to commuters leaving a Boston T station July 1 during a protest against planned searches by the MBTA.

because terrorists are not going to wait in a line to be searched.

"Imagine if you are a terrorist who wants to set up a bomb in the T. You see a long line at Park Street station because they are searching people, so you might decide to walk to Downtown Crossing where there is no search," Murray said. "We think the whole premise of it makes no sense. They really should rely more on intelligence-led expeditions rather than fishing expeditions."

Pesaturo said if there are no random inspections, the alternative would be to do nothing and that is not an option for the MBTA.

"Based on information that we're getting from Homeland Security and other top law enforcement agencies, we have to act and that's why the chief has developed this policy," Pesaturo said.

To limit the time delays screenings will cause, the MBTA is asking riders to bring few items with them on the T.

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