

**The DC Bill of Rights Coalition  
Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Local Civil Liberties Activists Oppose Metro Bag Search Program**

Silver Spring, MD – The DC Bill of Rights Coalition and the Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition launched an online petition campaign today in opposition to the random bag search program announced on Thursday by DC Metro Transit Police.

It is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/wmata-petition>

“The online petition is just the first step in what is sure to be a vigorous campaign against a program that treats metro riders like criminal suspects and tramples on one of our most cherished liberties and constitutional rights,” said Thomas Nephew, a member of the Montgomery County Coalition.

Metro Police said they intend to begin implementing random bag searches at metro stations across the region. The program was initially announced in 2008, but was not implemented due to widespread community opposition. Security experts have called the program a waste of resources that would likely make residents less safe overall.

A frequent metro rider and member of the DC Bill of Rights Coalition, Karen O’Keefe, noted that “Random searches on Metro would be a significant inconvenience to riders who depend on Metro to get them where they need to go on time. Even if the searches are quite brief, as Metro claims, they will undoubtedly cause riders to miss trains, making Metro’s customers late to meetings and work.

“Metro officials are referencing a recent alleged bomb plot against Metro as justification for the random bag searches,” said Sue Udry, director of the Defending Dissent Foundation and a member of both coalitions. “They should remember that the plot was not real. It had been hatched by FBI agents, and the public was never in any danger,” she added.

"I am concerned about ALL and ANY kind of searches at or on the Metro. What does "random" mean? Every other person or every 5th backpack? Or will it really boil down to: every 20th

Capitols fan with brown skin, or every woman wearing a hijab and pushing a baby stroller, or every homeless man with symptoms of schizophrenia?” asked Arlington resident Desiree Farooz.

*The DC Bill of Rights Coalition is an ad hoc coalition of activists and organizations concerned about attacks on Americans’ civil liberties. It was initially organized two years ago to oppose Metro’s random bag search proposal and address other civil liberties concerns. The recently-formed Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition is organizing to advocate civil liberties and civil rights proposals in Montgomery County.*