

**Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP)**

**134 Mathewson Street**

**Providence, RI 02903**

**401.351.5577**

April 7, 2021

Re: Written Testimony Regarding Article 1, Section 18

Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am writing in my capacity as the Director of the RI Organizing Project. I have been working with low-income elders and adults with disabilities on transit issues for the past 8 years.

I am very concerned about plans to eliminate 75% of the bus stops at Kennedy Plaza. Dismantling Kennedy Plaza is not in the best interest of Rhode Island's Public Transit System. It will lead to unnecessary delays for most transit riders and place a particular burden on the elderly and adults with disabilities.

I have been speaking with transit riders for the past six months about the Department of Transportation's plan to eliminate Kennedy Plaza as the central bus hub. Bus riders are almost unanimously opposed to the project. They worry about their ability to make timely transfers to critical activities such as food shopping, medical appointments, volunteer work, and paid employment opportunities.

The 2014 Mass Transit Hub Infrastructure Bond was not intended for dismantling existing transit hubs such as Kennedy Plaza. The funds would be better spent expanding public transit access in other parts of the state.

Specifically, I urge you to Amend Article 1, Section 18 by inserting the following two sentences beginning on line 6 as follows:

"Per the 2014 Mass Transit Hub Infrastructure Bond ballot question, funds may only be utilized to fund enhancements and renovations to transit hub infrastructures. No bond funds may be utilized to dismantle or otherwise deconstruct the state's primary transit hub in Kennedy Plaza."

Sincerely,

Raymond R Gagne  
Director  
RI Organizing Project

