

Dear Chair Solomon and Committee members,

My name is Cedric Ye, I am a high school student and daily RIPTA rider who lives in Providence, and I am writing in support of Bill H8127.

RIPTA's unprecedented service cuts have been devastating for transit riders like me. Although my route's frequency was reduced by just 10 minutes, my commute from school has doubled in length because I now have to wait a full 40 minutes for the bus instead of 5. Often, buses run so late that it is faster for me to walk, and I've often ridden buses so crowded we broke federal law. Even so, I consider myself a lucky transit rider -- 30% of respondents to a rider survey by the Save RIPTA coalition reported being concerned about losing employment, and 3% had already lost it by November. Every single time I've taken the bus to the State House, my bus has been so crowded *we violate federal law*, and we still pass someone at the train station. In fact, riders are stranded from overcrowding all the time; 70% of drivers report leaving riders stranded at least once per day.

**The RIPTA Board Chair called the worst service cuts in RIPTA's 60 year history "exciting times"**, because the RIPTA Board Chair is the director of RIDOT - an individual who simply does not have expertise or experience in the public transit field. Instead of doing everything in his power to stop the service cuts, Director Alviti wrote in opposition to bills that would fund RIPTA, because the proposed funding mechanisms would have a small impact on RIDOT's budget. It's not just about a person, but the fundamental conflict of interest. Both RIDOT and RIPTA's primary sources of state funding are the gas tax and Highway Maintenance Account. A RIDOT director, as part of their job description, will rightfully prioritize their agency over a different one, but this has devastating consequences if that RIDOT director is in a leadership position at another agency. There is no reason to believe other DOT directors will act otherwise; Interim Director Rocchio referred to stepping into the role of RIPTA Board chair as "a bit of a learning curve."

**At best, RIDOT's leadership of RIPTA is a major distraction from their core responsibilities of road repair, bridge maintenance, and toll management when these issues have never been more relevant. At worst, it results in uninformed decisions and devastation for transit riders.** I urge you to please pass H8127 to remove this conflict of interest and ensure that both RIPTA and RIDOT can serve the needs of their own constituents most effectively.

Sincerely,

Cedric Ye  
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