

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Committee members,

My name is Susan Marcus and I live in Wakefield. I am writing in support of Rep. Alzate's bill H6020. The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority(RIPTA) is facing a deficit of \$32.6 million dollars, this deficit is caused from years of underfunding and undervaluing our vital transit system that Rhode Islanders need.

I can't be in the legislature in person because I am in New York City where today I took a subway to a doctor's appointment and a ferry from 90th Street to Wall Street. Admittedly, New York is more densely populated than all of Rhode Island. But cities and states of all sizes profoundly benefit from effective public transit. Effective public transit requires routine, sufficient funding. Rhode Island's economy and environment suffer from gross under funding of public transit across many years.

Many legislators, like too many Rhode Islanders, view RIPTA as service for the poor. This is short-sighted. Tens of thousands of Rhode Island residents and visitors rely on RIPTA to get where they need to go. Tens of thousands more could use the system if it were adequately funded to enable it to serve more comprehensively. We don't shut down highways when money to fix them is tight, we shouldn't slash public transportation either. Without the necessary funds to address RIPTA's \$32.6M budget shortfall in 2026, the essential services it provides—such as access to employment, healthcare, and education—will be at risk.

A serious funding shortfall would guarantee the people of Rhode Island would lose their ability to capture a future of greater promise.

I urge you to support H6020, to give public transit and the riders who rely on RIPTA a fighting chance, averting a financial catastrophe that would result in massive job losses and an economic death spiral for some of Rhode Island's most vulnerable residents but for all of us.

Sincerely,

Susan Marcus
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