



STATE of RHODE ISLAND
Executive Department
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
John O. Pastore Center, 41 Cherry Dale Court
Cranston, RI 02920-3049
[voice] (401) 462-0110 [tty] via RI Relay 711
[e-mail] elisabeth.hubbard@gcd.ri.gov [website]
www.disabilities.ri.gov

Legislative Impact Statement

To: Representative Abney, Chair
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary
Re: 25 House 5405 AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- SALES AND USE TAXES --
LIABILITY AND COMPUTATION
25 House 6020 RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$32,594,799 TO
THE RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. Please contact me (462-0110) if testimony for additional information.

The Commission finds this bill beneficial.

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities is writing to express our support of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA).

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority is of particular concern to the Commission and individuals with disabilities in this state, as so many people with disabilities in the state rely on RIPTA and the RIDE paratransit program as their only source of transportation. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) recently began working on an Olmstead Plan to best serve people with disabilities in the least restrictive settings. In the Olmstead Plan meetings and in the public listening sessions held by EOHHS, transportation was one of the main concerns people raised.

Paratransit services (door-to-door services provided to individuals with disabilities who cannot access fixed-route buses) enable people with disabilities to travel within the state. It allows people with disabilities to live more independently and access services that are essential (such as doctor's offices, schools, employment, shopping, and social services) as well as recreation that improves their quality of life. By federal law, paratransit is required to be provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of all fixed routes, but many states have expanded services to improve people's access to their community. RIPTA expanded its pilot program to allow those who are eligible for paratransit to schedule trips anywhere in the state. We have heard from individuals who use the program that it has greatly expanded their access to the state. They are able to take classes, patronize

small businesses, and visit friends and family in areas where they previously could not travel.

The Governor's proposed budget includes a \$32,000,000 reduction in funding for RIPTA. Any reduction or reallocation of RIPTA funding would have the potential to impact its ability to provide both fixed route and paratransit services. It would also be a threat to the paratransit pilot program. These bills would provide additional funding to RIPTA to enable it to maintain its current level of services.