

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Joanne Rich and I live on the east side of Providence. I am writing in strong support of H5405. By allocating the current rideshare tax, we can secure a sustainable RIPTA funding source and be less reliant on the annual budget rollercoaster to meet one of RI's basic needs.

As a RIPTA rider, keeping our public transit system funded is of personal importance to me. Not only I, but my fellow riders, rely on it to get to our jobs, medical appointments, and shopping. I am particularly worried for those who depend on the para-transit RIPTA ride system. We take for granted that we have the money to own a car and the health to drive it. **Just take a moment and try to imagine your day-to-day life if you didn't have a car and couldn't afford Lyft or Uber.**

Lyft and Uber cannot and should not replace public transit. They pollute, they are less safe, and they cut into the already low-wages that service and gig workers are earning.

If we want people to pull themselves out of poverty, they need to be able to get to their jobs and their classes.

Lastly, as an environmentalist, keeping the busses running is crucial to meeting our carbon goals. Maybe legislators looking at the overall state budget crunch and impending federal cuts think RIPTA isn't a burning issue, but our planet is **literally** burning. We cannot afford to be short sighted.

I urge you to support H5405, 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.

Sincerely,
Joanne Rich