

To Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Merissa Homer, I live in Providence, and I am writing in support of Representative Morales' H5405. This act would allocate the current rideshare tax to fund RIPTA and ensure another sustainable funding stream in the future.

I have the good fortune to live in the area of Providence served by RIPTA bus lines 27, 28, 17, and 19. Recently my wife and I got last minute tickets to see a show at PPAC and we wanted to avoid the hassle and cost of parking, so we walked half a block to our nearest RIPTA stop and waited about 10 minutes and paid 2 bucks each for the bus ride. After the show while downtown we had dinner at one of Providence's many award winning restaurants, and stopped by a local bookstore on our way home. All of this was made easily accessible to us thanks to RIPTA. And what's more, we got the chance to meet and chat with some of our neighbors while on the bus and made memorable connections with people we wouldn't have met if we had been in a rideshare vehicle. In fact, the only reason I considered hailing a ride on Uber or Lyft that night was that the bus stop had no shelter of any kind and nowhere to sit while we waited. Those are issues that could be easily fixed with proper funding for RIPTA.

One of my favorite reasons to use public transit, besides the convenience and affordability, is knowing that i'm taking advantage of one small opportunity to make my fellow citizen's day just a **little** bit easier. Every individual that chooses to use public transit, makes the transit experience better *for every other person of every mode of transportation*. By using the bus instead of a car, that's one less car for cyclists and pedestrians to have to look out for, one less car for other car users to compete for parking spaces with, and one less car causing traffic congestion for other buses to potentially get stuck in. Truthfully, my taking the bus even makes the transportation experience easier for the Lyft and Uber users.

As a transit rider and supporter, I am relying on you to support this simple solution for increasing revenue for RIPTA by diverting sales tax from rides taken on Uber and Lyft. Securing new and diverse funding streams that do not rely on the federal government or declining gas tax revenue will not only increase RIPTA's financial stability, but allow for the expansion of service to meet the needs of a growing population that requires access to the affordable and sustainable travel option that public transit provides.

I urge you to support H5405, to give public transit the funding it needs to expand service, attract new riders, and get working people where they need to go, affordably and safely.

Sincerely,

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Merissa Homer
Providence, RI