

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 H5467 this legislation can provide more stable funding for RIPTA for years to come.

As a RIPTA rider with a disability, 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.**

RIPTA has been underfunded for so long and now needs sustainable funding sources. If our transit system isn't funded tens of thousands will lose access to one of their basic needs, and potentially 300 RIPTA workers will be laid off.

If we somehow expect people to pull themselves out of poverty, we need to make sure they can get to work and their college classes. We say we care about high school absenteeism, but if students can't stay after school for programs that are meaningful to them, they are less likely to go altogether. If we want our society to be less harsh and ruthless, we need to make sure that everyone can get around.

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 H5467, 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