

Steven Sepe

From: Jo Avanti <joavanti11@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 21, 2025 1:03 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: SUPPORT H5468 Motor Fuel Tax – Two-year Inflation Rate.

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 H5468. This vital 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 DIRECT 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.**

The legislature can and should create sustainable funding sources to keep RIPTA out of the annual budget crunch roller coaster.

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 H5468, 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