

SAVE RIPTA

May 21st, 2025
House Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903
RE: Support H5470

Dear Chair Abney and Committee Members,

The Save RIPTA Coalition is a broad coalition of community organizations, labor unions, legislative champions and everyday Rhode Islanders who call upon our state to save and expand the capacity of RIPTA to get Rhode Islanders where they need to go with affordable, convenient, environmentally responsible and reliable public transit.

The Save RIPTA Coalition would like to extend its support of Representative Tanzi's bill H5470, this would submit the state's 2026 capital development program requesting the issuance of general obligation bonds totaling one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) for approval of the electorate at the general election to be held in November, 2026.

This bond for \$100 million would be great improvements and ensure we are working towards a more accessible, safer and reliable public transit system in Rhode Island. This bond would provide direct funding for a statewide transit system by providing improvement to: bus stops and shelters; safety and access to bus stops, including crosswalks, sidewalks and curb ramps; mobility hub and passenger facility infrastructure, including bathrooms, sheltered and secured bike racks and indoor waiting areas.

A reliable public transportation system are lifelines – for our youth, for our seniors, for our disabled, for our low income, for our new arrivals, and for those who would rather take a ride than contribute to our chronic traffic, parking, and pollution issues. Rhode Island has the foundation of a wonderful statewide bus system, but it has **suffered from disinvestment and neglect for many years.**

As we face long-term chronic congestion – caused by the Washington Bridge failure and generations of car-centric investment – it is now more necessary than ever to invest in and *expand* public transportation to meet the needs of a 21st century Rhode Island, not eliminate

service across the state. A functional transit system is key to our efforts to reduce emissions, to connect communities, and to create healthy, vibrant local economies. But in order to make that a reality, we need to invest in it like the serious piece of infrastructure that it is, which **means expanding service, compensating our operators fairly, and making sure it is timely and reliable.**

We urge you to support H5470, to give public transit in Rhode Island the generational investment it needs to become a high-quality, 21st Century system that current and future residents and visitors can rely on.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nicole O'Loughlin and members of the Save RIPTA Coalition