

To the House Committee on Finance,

I am writing in support of House Bill 6020, to properly fund RIPTA. This bill would appropriate the sum of \$32,594,799 to the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority.

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) is facing a deficit of \$32.6 million dollars, this deficit is caused from years of underfunding and undervaluing our vital transit system that Rhode Islanders need.

Tens of thousands of Rhode Island residents and visitors rely on RIPTA to get where they need to go. Left unaddressed, the cuts to service and economic impacts would be catastrophic. Not only would hundreds of good paying union jobs be lost, countless of working-class people who rely on RIPTA would be forced to use expensive alternate means, or just lose their jobs or be unable to access essential services entirely. We don't shut down highways when money to fix them is tight, we shouldn't slash public transportation either. Without the necessary funds to address RIPTA's \$32.6M budget shortfall in 2026, the essential services it provides—such as access to employment, healthcare, and education—will be at risk.

This funding shortfall could lead to service cuts, fare hikes, or reduced operational hours, disproportionately affecting low-income communities and individuals who rely on public transit to live their daily lives. Ensuring that RIPTA's deficit is addressed is not just a matter of supporting an agency—it is a matter of supporting the people of Rhode Island and their ability to thrive.

I urge you to support H6020, 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.

Thank you.

Alex Denisevich  
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