

Dear Chair Abney and honorable members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Cedric Ye, I live in Providence, and I am a 16 year old high school student at the Providence Country Day School. **I am writing in strong support of H6020, Rep. Alzate's \$32.6M budget allocation for RIPTA.**

RIPTA is extremely important to me as a high school student. I use RIPTA to go to and from school almost daily, which has given me an enormous amount of flexibility and independence and helped enable my parents to sell one of their cars. If the House enabled RIPTA to collapse, **having to get my drivers license and rely on driving would cost my family an additional \$12,000 annually**, plus licensing costs, plus student insurance premiums. With Rhode Islanders already facing unprecedented cuts to services like SNAP and Medicaid, this is a staggering cost that so many households simply cannot afford.

I understand that some legislators are using RIPTA's delayed efficiency study as a reason to withhold additional funding for RIPTA, but **RIPTA has already been studied for efficiency seven times**. In particular, the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) **credited RIPTA as one of the most efficient mid-size transit agencies in the nation**, "outperforming similar agencies across the country in almost every key performance indicator. Despite a chronic lack of funding, RIPTA provides more trips, in a larger area, at a more effective cost per trip than other transit agencies that serve similar population areas or provide statewide service anywhere in America". **There is nothing left to cut from RIPTA except essential lifelines that people would lose their jobs without.**

Last year, RIPTA estimated that a \$33M fiscal cliff would result in the complete elimination of 17 bus routes, including ***all bus and paratransit service to Westerly, Hopkinton, Burrillville, Foster, Gloucester, Scituate, West Greenwich, Richmond, Tiverton, North Smithfield, and Quonset.*** RIPTA also warned of reduced frequency on 15 routes, and **complete elimination of Providence Public Schools service, and complete elimination of all Sunday service statewide.** RIPTA's fiscal cliff goes beyond the 30,000 daily riders who depend on RIPTA; **it would be catastrophic to the entire state**, from exasperating chronic absenteeism in Providence Public schools to leaving rural households stranded and jobless and putting more cars on our overburdened highways. In fact, Philadelphia's public transit system estimated that service cuts would result in tax revenue losses **three times higher** than its additional funding need.

I recognize that this is a very tight fiscal year for the state, but we don't close our highways when funding runs dry; we are still plowing ahead with a *\$700 million dollar* new Washington Bridge, and we never did an "efficiency study" for the bridge. **We need to**

ensure that *every* Rhode Islander – and not just those privileged enough to afford a car – can access jobs, education, and essential services.

I urge you to please support H6020 and prevent devastating service cuts across the state. For tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders who rely on transit, RIPTA's fiscal cliff isn't about political compromises or "efficiency studies"; it is the loss of a job, exclusion from educational opportunities, or introduction of a new \$12,000 income tax.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Cedric Ye

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