

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I'm writing in support of H6020, which would provide badly needed funding for RIPTA, an agency that serves more than 30,000 Rhode Island residents and visitors each day.

I am a Pawtucket resident who has been car-free for about 10 years in Rhode Island who relies on RIPTA as well as biking and walking to get around. I am deeply concerned about RIPTA's financial situation, facing a \$32.6 million fiscal cliff, that would directly impact me if service cuts were to go into effect. The routes I use in Pawtucket and Central Falls to get to things like doctors appointments and to get groceries were on the chopping block around this time last year, and there is every indication these bus routes would be impacted again if the much larger fiscal cliff were not funded this time around.

That is why I am supporting Rep. Alzate's bill that would fill the gap left in Governor McKee's budget. We cannot go backwards with our public transit in Rhode Island. Too many people's livelihoods, healthcare, and everyday lives depend on the RIPTA service they rely on.

If service cuts were to go into effect, 300 good, family-sustaining jobs at RIPTA is not all that would be lost. The ripple effect would be felt across our economy, untold hundreds of people would lose the jobs they commute to. In 2023, facing a similar fiscal cliff, RIPTA presented what it would look like if the agency had to cut costs, with the potential to lose all Sunday service. This would have major impacts on tourism and hospitality, impacting both the people who enjoy visiting, and those who need to get to and from their service jobs. This is just one of many catastrophic impacts to transit that we can expect if RIPTA is not fully funded this year. Transit riders who depend on RIPTA deserve better.

I urge you to support Rep. Alzate's bill H6020, a lifeline for RIPTA and everyone who depends on it.

Thank you,

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