

Dear Chairman Abney and Committee members,

My name is Peter Brassard, I am writing in support of Representative Alzate's House bill H6020.

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 the vital transit system that Rhode Island needs.

RIPTA's transit service is an essential and integral part of the state's economy. Tens of thousands of Rhode Island residents and visitors rely on RIPTA for transportation. Left unaddressed, the cuts to service and economic impacts would be catastrophic. The effects of funding deficit cuts would be widespread affecting workers at all economic levels, employers, low income residents, the elderly, students, and visitors.

Retaining and attracting employers, large and small, depends on maintaining a well funded robust transit system that includes bus and rail. Tourism is a large contributor to the state's economy. Bus transit offers last mile connections for employees who use commuter rail and tourists who arrive by Amtrak or air.

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 would 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 a death spiral for RIPTA, massive job and economic losses for some of Rhode Island's most vulnerable residents.

Sincerely,

Peter Brassard

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