

Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP)
134 Mathewson Street
Providence, RI 02903
401.351.5577

May 21, 2025.

Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am writing in support of H6020, H5405, H5467, and H5468. The funds generated from these four bills would help RIPTA address its projected deficit of \$32.6 million. The funds would also provide RIPTA with a more stable source of funding for future budgets.

I am writing in my capacity as the Director of the RI Organizing Project (RIOP). RIOP has been working on transportation issues for the past 10 years. We work primarily with low-income elderly and disabled bus riders. The bus riders we work with depend upon RIPTA for their daily transportation needs. A reduction in bus service due to RIPTA's impending \$32.6 million deficit would be devastating to the elderly and disabled. It would make it more difficult for them to go food shopping, get to medical appointments, and visit family and friends.

Listed below are quotes from three of the community members we work with about the importance of RIPTA :

"RIPTA helps me to go to the doctors and food shopping. I have asthma and it is hard for me to get around. I can't walk far without being out of breath. I hope they don't cut the service. I depend upon RIPTA" Barbara Buxton from West Warwick.

"RIPTA gets me where I want to go. I am a Vet and need to go to the VA in Providence. Cabs are problematic if I have a lot of appointments. With RIPTA I can go to my appointments with no problems. There are a lot of other vets and disabled people that depend upon RIPTA. "Robert Hunter from Newport.

"RIPTA saves my life as well as others. Not everyone can afford a car. I need RIPTA to go to appointments and buy food. RIPTA is a lifesaving necessity. "Deborah Wray from Providence.

Thank you for your ongoing support of RIPTA. Once again, I ask your support for H6020, H5405, H5467, and H5468.

Sincerely,

Raymond R Gagne Jr
Director
Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP)

