

Dear Chair Cortvriend and honorable Committee members,

My name is Cedric Ye, and I am a high school student who lives in Providence and relies on RIPTA daily. I am writing in support of bill H7127 funding RIPTA's budget; however, **I urge you to support a \$5M allocation to restore last year's service cuts**, which have become a crisis for transit riders.

RIPTA's unprecedented service cuts last year reduced service on 45 bus routes, including the #33, which I use to commute to high school every day. Although frequencies were reduced a small amount -- from every 30 to every 40 minutes -- **my commute has doubled in time, as I now have to wait 40 minutes at school instead of five**. Often, the bus is so slow and late that I could get home -- which is four miles away -- faster by walking. I have lost critical homework time, have missed important civic events, and have found rejoining some extracurriculars to be infeasible due to the service cuts. Even so, I consider myself to be lucky because I can still get to school at all.

Last Wednesday, I took the #50 to testify at the House Judicial Committee. **My bus was so crowded that we violated federal law on safe bus operations during my entire trip**. Even so, we couldn't accept new riders and still left someone stranded at the train station. When I looked at that stranded person's face, I saw frustration and desperation, but not confusion. Being stranded is a common experience for far too many bus riders. According to a driver survey conducted by the Save RIPTA coalition, **70% of drivers leave riders stranded at least once a day due to chronic overcrowding** on buses that are almost certainly violating federal law.

RIPTA is not "right sized", it is "wrong sized" -- it literally cannot run enough buses to support its existing riders. We are spending half a billion dollars on a new Washington bridge because of overcrowding. It is imperative that you recognize the similar crisis facing bus riders, which would require \$5M, or 1.2% of a Washington Bridge, to fix.

I implore you to please support H7127, RIPTA's funding in the Governor's budget, and **support \$5M in funding to restore the service cuts last year**. Without reversing RIPTA's devastating service cuts, RIPTA cannot grow to meet our climate, social justice, and economic goals, and thousands of riders will continue to be stranded as unsafe, illegally overcrowded buses pass them by.