

TO: House Finance Subcommittee on Environment & Transportation, Rep. Terri Cortvriend,
Chair

Dear Chair Cortvriend and Committee members,

My name is Courtney Sowa, I live in Providence, and I am writing in support of Bill H7127 funding the RIPTA budget and urging you to support the restoration of funding for RIPTA by undoing the service cuts.

Watching the stark impacts of the service cuts last fall I find myself constantly returning to the incredibly well researched fact that transit agencies are either in a virtuous cycle or a vicious one. Funding deficits lead to service losses lead to ridership losses whereas investment leads to the frequency, trip times, and reliability which expand ridership and fare revenues which will stabilize the agency's funding in the future. RIPTA is one of the most efficient transit agencies in the country, and asking them to find further efficiency was like losing weight by amputating a leg. Please support level funding and consider restoring their previous budget not only for the students who can't get to school and the businesses that have been siloed from their employees, but because investment in growing transit would also begin to offset the delay of Rhode Island's climate goals, reduce wear and tear on our roads and bridges, and provide another tool for people to weather the affordability crisis.

As a transit rider and supporter, I am relying on you to support this bill which provides level funding for RIPTA at its current reduced size, and implore you to support increased funding to reverse the devastating service cuts in 2025. High quality public transportation in Rhode Island should be a no-brainer, with our compact size and abundance of destinations, getting around the state by bus is something everyone should be able to do, and an obvious investment in a public good. Instead, we continue to return to the State House to implore you to maintain the bare minimum funding to keep the system afloat. It's time to turn this vicious cycle into a virtuous one.

A recent report from the American Public Transit Authority confirmed what most of us already know: for every \$1 billion invested in public transportation, \$5 billion is generated in long-term economic value and supports jobs nationwide. That job support works out to \$3.1 billion in earned wages for every \$1 billion invested in public transit, according to the report. I encourage you to read the report: <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/APTA-Economic-Impact-of-Public-Transportation-022026.pdf>

I urge you to support the funding for RIPTA in the Governor's Budget, H7127 and to advocate for the restoration of funding that resulted in devastating service cuts this fall. Fully funding RIPTA is an investment that will give many returns: working class Rhode Islanders access to reliable and affordable transportation, economic growth and access to jobs and services, reduction in carbon emissions and traffic on the road, and so many more. Please support this investment to get Rhode Island back on track to create a 21st century transit system that works for everyone.

I urge you to support H7127 and increased funding for RIPTA.

Sincerely,

Courtney Sowa

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