

Dear Chair Cortvriend and Committee members,

My name is Jeanelle Wheeler. I live in Providence, and I am here/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. I use RIPTA every single day to get to and from work, to see friends, and to live all aspects of my life. I rely on over 20 different routes every month. I have already been affected by the service cuts, which have greatly increased my commute times and made it very inconvenient to rely on the bus. Wounding RIPTA wounds all of Rhode Island.

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,

Your name