

Dear Chair Cortvriend and Honorable members of the Committee,

My name is Kenny Uong, I live in Providence, and I would like to express my strong support for H7127. This bill includes \$13.8 million in funding for RIPTA in the Governor's budget. However, this will only prevent cuts from happening this year and will not reverse the devastating service cuts from September 2025. Therefore, I strongly urge you to also support Representative Alzate's H8256, which would increase funding by \$5 million in the FY 2027 budget to help RIPTA restore service prior to the major cuts that took effect last fall.

As a RIPTA rider and transit advocate, it has been truly heartbreaking to see how fellow riders have been affected by the service cuts. The past few harsh winter months have only made things worse, as riders are forced to wait longer for buses at stops that often have no seating or shelter. Commutes have become longer and less predictable, with delays becoming more common.

We need to stop "right-sizing" RIPTA to the point where it becomes an unreliable and usable system. Ridership has already declined by about 12 percent as a result of the cuts. When service becomes less frequent, riders lose trust in the system and are forced to find other costly ways to get around. For many Rhode Islanders, especially seniors, students, and workers without cars, transit is how they get to work, school, medical appointments, and other essential services.

It is frustrating that riders and advocates have to return to the State House year after year just to ask for the basic funding needed to keep RIPTA running. Rather than just managing decline, our state should ensure stable, sustainable funding that lets RIPTA maintain reliable service and strengthen service statewide.

I strongly urge you to support the funding for RIPTA in the Governor's budget, H7127, and to also advocate for restoring the funding needed to reverse the devastating service cuts that took effect last fall. Failing to do so will further undermine the role of public transit as a reliable way for Rhode Islanders to get around the Ocean State. Please save RIPTA before it's too late.

Thank you,

Kenny Uong

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