

SAVE RIPTA

PVDStreets.org/Save-RIPTA

April 14th, 2026
House Committee on Finance
RE: Support H8145

Dear Chair DiPalma and Committee Members,

I am writing today on behalf of the 32 members of the [Save RIPTA Coalition](#) to express our strong support for Representative Stewart's H8145 which would provide additional annual revenue to public transportation by redirecting the existing 7% sales tax paid on private rideshare trips to RIPTA's Paratransit and Ride Anywhere programs operational budget.

Last year the General Assembly passed the FY2026 budget with language stating that paratransit was not to receive any cuts and the one-year Ride Anywhere pilot, which increases paratransit service statewide, be made permanent. However, **no additional funding was provided for these programs to address skyrocketing demand** caused by cuts to the fixed route system, the larger paratransit service area, and an increasingly older population.

According to a memo from CEO Durand, "With the Rhode Island General Assembly's requirement that RIPTA expand the Ride paratransit program statewide, beyond ADA service area requirements, it is important to manage capacity and strengthen controls around program participation to protect the system's intended users." **Without additional funding for Ride anywhere, RIPTA may be forced to make eligibility more strict, depriving many Rhode Islanders of access to this critical service.**

The demand for paratransit service is so high that RIPTA is forced to supplement its own vehicles and drivers with expensive private taxi rides. Meanwhile, paratransit riders are experiencing longer and longer wait times and declining customer service.

Redirecting existing sales tax on rideshare trips is a common sense measure that would provide RIPTA with an estimated \$10M-\$15M additional annual revenue. This badly needed funding stream redirects tax revenues that users are already paying to a travel mode that offers more affordable transportation to larger numbers of people, in a more sustainable way.

The harmful impacts of companies like Uber and Lyft on public transportation have been studied extensively (see reports [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). Backed by venture capital, these companies have kneecapped our public transit agencies, caused much higher rates of traffic congestion and air pollution in our cities, and while they give drivers some flexible employment, we all know how hard they have fought against bills that would classify their drivers as actual employees.

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That is why we are urging you to support H8145 and are relying on you to support this simple solution for increasing support for people with disabilities to travel around our state by diverting the existing sales tax from rides taken on Uber and Lyft -- companies that are actively hurting public transit.

This will not only achieve better financial stability for RIPTA, but allow for the sustainability and improvement of statewide paratransit service for all Rhode Islanders who qualify for the service due to a disability.

Sincerely,



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