



LOCAL DIVISION 618
AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION, AFL-CIO-CLC
HEADQUARTERS

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Dear Chair Abney and Committee members,

My name is **Walter Melillo President, Business Agent ATU Local 618**, I live in **Cranston**, and I am writing in support of Bill H8178.

I represent approximately **700 employees** at the **Rhode Island Public Transit Authority**. The recent service reductions have had a considerable effect on the health and safety of our members, leading to shorter recovery times during shifts and impacting on their mental and physical health. Additionally, riders are experiencing lower service quality and decreased frequency because of these changes. It is essential for RIPTA to secure a sustainable funding source.

In comparison to federal standards, Rhode Island's Highway Maintenance Account (HMA) shortchanges RIPTA. An 80/20 split for surface transportation funding between highways and mass transit has been the standard in Congress since 1982, yet Rhode Island practices a 90/10 split. RIPTA needs a larger and more predictable state funding source in order to thrive.

As a transit worker and supporter, I am relying on you to support this simple solution for increasing revenue and ridership for RIPTA. Securing funding streams that do not rely on the federal government or declining gas tax revenue will not only achieve financial stability, but allow for the expansion of service to meet the needs of a growing population that requires access to the affordable and sustainable travel option that public transit provides.

I urge you to support Representative Cortvriend's H8178 to increase revenue for RIPTA, giving Rhode Island residents better access to affordable transportation and providing sustainable funding for public transit to thrive.

Sincerely,



Walter Melillo

President, Business Agent, ATU Local 618