

Testimony on House Bill 8202
A Joint Resolution Submitting to the Electors a Proposition
to Issue Bonds Relating to Capital Development Program

April 14, 2026

Chairperson Abney and members of the House Committee on Finance:

I am writing to express my strong support for H8202, a critical piece of legislation that provides the framework and funding necessary to implement the Transit Master Plan (Transit Forward RI 2040). As a resident of Warwick and a dedicated rider who has relied on RIPTA for my primary transportation since 2016, I am speaking today as a consumer who sees the daily necessity of these improvements.

Central to the success of H8202 is the \$100 million in proposed capital improvements. From a rider's perspective, our transit infrastructure must be treated as a growing economic engine rather than a static utility. This investment is not just about maintenance; it is about building the infrastructure of a world-class system that works for the people who use it every day.

The \$100 million in capital funding will allow for:

- **High-Capacity Corridors:** Building dedicated bus lanes and signal priority technology that allow buses to bypass traffic, making transit the most efficient way to travel between Warwick and Providence.
- **Modern Transit Hubs:** Replacing basic stops with regional hubs that offer dignity to riders—featuring climate-controlled waiting areas, real-time arrival data, and improved security.
- **Fleet Electrification:** Providing the essential infrastructure for zero-emissions buses, ensuring Rhode Island meets its climate mandates while improving air quality in our most congested urban areas.
- **Safety and Accessibility:** Funding the statewide overhaul of bus shelters to ensure they are well-lit, ADA-compliant, and safe for all community members, especially during inclement weather.

In my experience, mobility is a fundamental pillar of stability. When a bus is late or a route is cut, it isn't just an inconvenience; it is a barrier to healthcare, employment, and essential social services. For those of us who rely on the bus for every aspect of our lives, the reliability of the system dictates our ability to participate in the community. H8202 is a vital step toward creating a balanced transportation network that reduces congestion and makes our urban centers more accessible and vibrant for everyone.

Rhode Island has the potential to lead the region in sustainable, accessible transit. Service expansion cannot happen without the capital capacity to support it. By investing these funds now, we are ensuring that RIPTA has the tools to grow and serve the public effectively.

I urge this committee to pass H8202 and secure a mobile and prosperous future for our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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