

Dear Chair Abney and Committee members,

My name is Brian Wenger, I live in Providence and I am writing in support of Bill H8317, Representative Alzate's \$5M allocation to reverse RIPTA's service cuts.

I moved to Providence car-free and have relied heavily on RIPTA as an affordable alternative to get around the city. I work in healthcare and so having this option is critical for me to be able to get to and from work.

Furthermore, the service cuts have been devastating for tens of thousands of riders like me. A report released by the Save RIPTA coalition found that since the service cuts went into effect in September 2025:

- Ridership dropped 12.1% or about 125,000 trips by November
- Riders are burdened with less reliable and frequent service — restricting access to jobs, healthcare, education, and recreation
- 30% of RIPTA riders are at risk of losing employment, 8% lost pay, and 3.6% lost their jobs directly
- RIPTA operators' working conditions have deteriorated
- RIPTA service has gotten 29% more expensive to operate per service hour

'Public Transit' is mentioned no less than 80 times in Rhode Island's own strategic plans for economic development, housing production, and climate. However, the service cuts have left RIPTA too small and crippled to even meet the needs of its existing riders, let alone expand to strengthen our state's competitiveness and livability.

That's why I'm urging you to support H8317. Without reversing RIPTA's devastating service cuts, RIPTA cannot meet the needs of a growing population that requires affordable and sustainable transportation, and RIPTA cannot grow to meet our climate, social justice, and economic goals.

Sincerely,

Brian Wenger

21 East Transit St Apt 2, Providence, RI 02906