

Dear Chair Abney and Committee members,

My name is Cameron, 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 Rhode Island at the beginning of 2025 and utilized RIPTA as my main mode of transportation. I am privileged enough to live and work near two of the rapid service bus lines. However, I have had to travel to cities like Warwick, Woonsocket, and Newport for grocery shopping, appointments, and interviews; in several of those instances, I have cut very close to on time due to late and delayed services. It becomes increasingly frustrating to travel to cities outside of Providence, as the bus system becomes less frequent, and you may have to wait up to 30 minutes to an hour for the next one. Many of those moments, I have instead resorted to taking an Uber/Lyft, which can cost up to \$20, rather than using my bus pass, which my job covers.

Beyond my personal experiences, Rhode Island is unique for its small size, allowing buses to cover much more ground compared to other states. Providence is an expensive city to live in, so many live in more affordable areas such as Pawtucket, Cranston, Warwick, and East Providence. However, with cuts to those services, many are inconvenienced every day. Public transportation and housing go hand in hand. Providence is experiencing a housing shortage, and there is not really that much more room to build. Instead, those outlying cities should build up, but in order to encourage more people to live there, public transit needs to be expanded to those areas to make it more accessible. It's been proven, looking at other major cities in the United States (New York City, Boston, Chicago, Washington DC), that people like accessible and frequent public transportation and that it creates many opportunities, especially in this age where owning a car is getting more and more expensive. I believe not only will reserving the service cuts improve the lives of people here, but it will also help Rhode Island become more accessible for any future residents.

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:

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

Cameron Drury

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