

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable members of the Committee,

My name is Kenny Uong, I live in Providence, and I would like to express my strong support for Representative Alzate's Bill H8317.

This legislation would allocate \$5 million in funding to reverse RIPTA's service cuts that were implemented in September 2025. Tens of thousands of riders like me have been impacted by these devastating service reductions.

My trips on RIPTA have become less reliable since the service cuts went into effect, and the impacts are impossible to ignore. I am waiting longer for buses that often arrive overcrowded, with riders packed like sardines on board. Beyond the already busy R-Line, I often ride Routes 21 and 22, which connect Providence, Cranston, and Warwick via the Reservoir and Pontiac Avenue corridors respectively. These routes once ran every 35 to 40 minutes, but now come only every 55 to 60 minutes, making it harder to get to places on time. Public transit is a lifeline for our communities. If it is not treated and funded as a public good, then we are failing the very people who rely on it every day.

A report released by the Save RIPTA coalition found that since the service cuts went into effect last fall, ridership has dropped 12.1 percent, or about 125,000 trips by November. Riders are now dealing with less reliable and less frequent service, which restricts access to jobs, healthcare, education, and recreation. As a result, 30 percent of riders are at risk of losing employment, 8 percent have lost pay, and 3.6 percent have lost their jobs directly.

The report also found that working conditions for RIPTA operators have deteriorated, and that service has become 29 percent more expensive to operate per service hour, highlighting the broader impact of these cuts on both riders and workers.

RIPTA's current size is absolutely not the "right size" for RIPTA at all. Rhode Island deserves better public transit service. Transit is essential. I strongly urge all of you to save RIPTA before the network becomes even more unreliable and unusable.

Thank you,

Kenny Uong

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