

Chris O'Brien

From: melinda.rainsberger <melinda.rainsberger@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2026 1:27 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: SUPPORT (H8317) - \$5 million Budget Allocation for RIPTA

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Dear Chair Abney and Committee members,

My name is Mel Rainsberger, I live in Providence on the East Side, and I am writing in support of Bill H8317, Representative Alzate's \$5M allocation to reverse RIPTA's service cuts.

Due to RIPTA budget and service cuts, I've had to buy a car after thirteen years of being car free. I have terrible night vision, along with mobility issues that mean walking is better than sitting in a car, pushing on a gas pedal. Because of my recent car purchase, I have to go back to physical therapy--taking more time off work--in order to deal with the constant strain of driving a car.

The service cuts have been devastating for tens of thousands of riders like me. Not everyone is in a position to suddenly buy a car or deal with the maintenance of a vehicle. 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. I would absolutely lose my job if I couldn't drive there. The closest bus drops me off 15 minutes away. This would have been **an impossible journey** with the record levels of snow we got this winter.
- RIPTA operators' working conditions have deteriorated
- 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,

Mel Rainsberger
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