



Providence Student Union

Building student power

763R Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

TO: House Finance Committee
FROM: Providence Student Union
DATE: April 14, 2026
SUBJECT: SUPPORT (H8317) - \$5 million Budget Allocation for RIPTA

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Providence Student Union (PSU), we are writing in support of Bill H8317, Representative Alzate's \$5M allocation to reverse RIPTA's service cuts. Most high school students in Providence rely on RIPTA for their daily transportation, so any reductions in services directly impact students' ability to get to and from school (and anywhere else they need to go). Since the 2025 service cuts went into effect, we have experienced many challenges with taking RIPTA, including long wait times and generally longer routes, very limited options for the weekend, and trouble getting to school and work on time. In order to ensure sufficient transit options and have a functional state, we cannot accept the current conditions and funding levels of RIPTA. We need to invest in public transit as a public good that is essential for daily life for students and other Rhode Islanders.

The service cuts have been devastating for tens of thousands of riders, particularly impacting high school students. 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.

We are 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,

Providence Student Union