

Chris O'Brien

From: Rory Neuner <rory.neuner@gmail.com>
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To: House Finance Committee
Subject: SUPPORT, H8317, - \$5 million Budget Allocation for RIPTA

Categories: Red category

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Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Dear Chair Abney and Committee members,

My name is Rory Neuner and I live with my wife and our two young children in Providence. Today I am writing in **strong support of Bill H8317, Representative Alzate's \$5M allocation to reverse RIPTA's service cuts.**

When my wife and I first moved to Providence in 2020, we purposefully chose to live on the east side just off of Hope Street. We did so because we had a growing family, and this area is a walkable neighborhood, well-served by transit via the #1 bus and the R-Line. Having children is an expensive endeavor, and we are a one-car household by choice. We save thousands of dollars a year by only owning and operating one vehicle instead of two – money that can instead fund a weeknight dinner out, or go into our kids' college savings funds.

To make this possible, we rely on RIPTA and my electric bike to get around town (yes, even in the winter). Frequent service on the #1 route has been a lifesaver on days when it is too wet or icy to bike – my oldest daughter loves taking the bus to and from daycare, and is always ready to pull the cord when we get close to our stop.

The service cuts have been quite difficult. They've increased headways on the #1 and made it more difficult to rely on the bus, pushing us to rely more on ridesharing or to skip trips altogether. I know we're not alone – thousands of riders have been impacted. 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
- 30% of RIPTA riders are at risk of losing employment, 8% lost pay, and 3.6% lost their jobs directly
- RIPTA service has gotten 29% more expensive to operate per service hour

I do not have to tell you that Rhode Island is not a wealthy state. It is full of honest, hard-working people trying to do their best. Reliable public transit is a lifeline for so many working families trying to make ends meet – people trying to get to school and work to make their lives better. That's why I don't understand why we would do anything other than invest in public transit right now. At a time of unprecedented political and economic uncertainty, these service cuts have made life worse for so many. They've left RIPTA too small and crippled to meet the needs of its existing riders.

We should be doing the opposite right now: strengthening our state's ability to let hard-working people reliably get around. That said: I'm urging you to support H8317. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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