



LOCAL DIVISION 618
AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION, AFL-CIO-CLC
HEADQUARTERS

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Dear Chair Abney (House) and Committee members,

My name is **Walter Melillo President, Business Agent ATU Local 618**, I live in **Cranston**, and I am writing in support of Representative Furtado's Bill H8369.

I represent approximately **700 employees** at the **Rhode Island Public Transit Authority**. The recent service reductions have had a considerable effect on the health and safety of our members, leading to shorter recovery times during shifts and impacting on their mental and physical health. Additionally, riders are experiencing lower service quality and decreased frequency because of these changes. It is essential for RIPTA to secure a sustainable funding source.

It has been over 10 years since regular gas-powered car inspection fees were increased in Rhode Island, while we have added much higher taxes and fees to electric vehicles. We need to ensure we are not disproportionately allowing increases on some and not equitably across the board. We see our state struggling to provide an accessible public transit system and also our small businesses struggling financially, which both are great contributors to Rhode Island's economic successes. This bill will ensure both have more funding to ensure a better pathway to a more prosperous future.

As a transit worker and supporter, I am relying on you to support this simple solution for increasing revenue and ridership for RIPTA. Securing new and diverse funding streams that do not rely on the federal government or declining gas tax revenue will not only achieve financial stability, but allow for the expansion of service to meet the needs of a growing population that requires access to the affordable and sustainable travel option that public transit provides.

I urge you to support Senator Furtado's H8369, to increase revenue for RIPTA, while also helping the businesses receive an increase so that they can afford to perform inspections.

This gives Rhode Island residents access to affordable transportation and provides sustainable funding for public transit to thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Walter Melillo", written in a cursive style.

Walter Melillo

President, Business Agent, ATU Local 618