

May 1, 2026

Representative Carol Hagan McEntee  
House Judiciary Committee  
State of Rhode Island General Assembly  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Support for H8432 – An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses -- Assaults**

To the esteemed Chair of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **H8432– An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Assaults**. On behalf of the hard-working front-line staff at Keolis, we respectfully request your assistance in expanding the definition of individuals protected to include railroad workers as specified in this bill.

As the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority’s operating partner for the Commuter Rail since 2014, Keolis employs a workforce of more than 2,500 and is committed to creating a safe workplace environment for all of our employees. Ensuring the safety of our frontline employees, from customer service staff to conductors, and assistant conductors, often presents challenges due to the public-facing nature of their roles. This bill serves to afford the same protections to the Commuter Rail workforce that currently exist for others who provide a public service.

Unfortunately, we are seeing globally and across the Commuter Rail service network that assaults on public transit workers are on the rise. With this bill, we have the opportunity to enhance the protection of railroad workers, ensuring that assault against them is treated with the same severity as assaults against other public servants, enabling safer public transportation rides for all. This bill would amend the current law addressing assault and battery upon law enforcement officials, judges, railroad police, and other public servants to also include “any railroad workers”.

On the Commuter Rail system, which serves more than 170 cities and towns, via fifteen lines and at 146 stations, reportable assaults occur on average once a month and we believe that many more incidents go unreported because currently there’s no mechanism for enforcement. This bill would create equal protection for railroad workers and empower frontline workers to report these types of assaults knowing enforcement options exist.

Thank you for your attention to equal protections for the essential Commuter Rail workforce. On behalf of Keolis and our workforce, I respectfully request that you report the bill favorably from the Committee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



**John Killeen**  
Chief Executive Officer

