

Dear Chairman Corvese and Committee members,

My name is David Mann, I live in Providence, and I am writing in support of House Bill 5304. RIPTA is an essential service that bolsters our economy and supports the nearly 10% of Rhode Islanders who do not drive to meet their daily transportation needs. RIPTA is massively underfunded in the governor's proposed budget and it is essential that we find revenue sources to maintain service.

Requiring Rhode Island's largest employers to offer transit passes as a fringe benefit is a simple way to improve congestion, reduce emissions, and increase Rhode Island's competitiveness as a business-friendly destination.

The numbers speak for themselves. According to the American Public Transportation Association, individuals who use public transit save an average of \$9,000 annually compared to those who drive. In Rhode Island, where traffic congestion is a growing concern, this savings would provide significant financial relief to workers while decreasing congestion for all road users. Offering transit passes would ensure that employees, especially those with lower incomes, can access more affordable transportation options, reducing the burden of expensive gas, parking, and car maintenance costs.

Rhode Island's largest 25 companies employ more than 100,000 people (Source: Providence Business News), yet very few offer transit passes to employees as a fringe benefit. If even a fraction of this population took transit, it would have a profound impact on RIPTA ridership, carbon emissions, and highway congestion. By providing employees with reliable and affordable transportation options, employers can attract and retain a more diverse and skilled talent pool, particularly from areas that may be underserved by car-dependent infrastructure.

As a transit rider and supporter, I am relying on you to support this simple solution for increasing ridership and fare revenue 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 H5304, to support workers and increase revenue for RIPTA, giving Rhode Island workers access to affordable transportation and growing the base of ridership for public transit.

Sincerely,  
David Mann  
232 Adelaide Ave, Providence