

Dear Chairman Corvese and Committee members,

I'm Susan Marcus. I am writing in support of House Bill 5304. I live in Wakefield where the two largest employers are the South County Hospital and the main campus of URI. This community is too expensive for many of the employees of these two important institutions to live in town. University students pose an additional commuting/housing problem. Requiring these institutions and other large RI employers to offer transit passes as a benefit is a simple way to help people where they need to go.

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. Reliable and affordable transportation options would allow employers to attract and retain a more diverse and skilled talent pool, particularly from areas that may be underserved by car-dependent infrastructure.

Transit passes would support our economy more broadly. Using land to add parking lots in a community where it's costly to build homes is a disincentive for developers who might provide workforce housing. The hospital has been struggling with parking issues for years.

As a transit 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 students and increase revenue for RIPTA, giving Rhode Islanders access to affordable transportation and growing the base of ridership for public transit.

Sincerely,

Susan Marcus  
468 Post Road  
Wakefield, RI 02879