

Chair Corvese and Committee members,

My name is Shane Martin, I live in Smithfield, and I am here/writing in support of Bill H7363. As I work for Brown, I already benefit from my commute being supported by my employer with RIPTA. My transit to work is painless and doesn't cost me anything other than getting to the bus, something that corporations should support. Requiring Rhode Island's largest employers to offer transit passes as a fringe benefit is a simple way to reduce congestion, reduce emissions, and increase Rhode Island's competitiveness as a business-friendly, and human-friendly, destination.

The economics is something that all legislators should get behind. According to the American Public Transportation Association, individuals who use public transit save an average of **\$9,000** annually compared to those who drive. Even if you still own a car, this reduces yearly maintenance and energy costs for commuters by \$5,000 or more. 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. Less cars on the road means fewer accidents, fewer claims, saved pedestrian lives and lower costs for Rhode Islanders with insurance. Offering transit passes would ensure that all employees, lower incomes to the richest CEO, 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.

To go further, I would **propose an amendment to H7363** to install Transit Signal Priority (TSP) systems on busses, giving them the literal green light through intersections and incentivising faster, more efficient commutes by jumping on RIPTA.

I urge you to support H7363, 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,

Shane Martin

108 Burlingame Rd, Smithfield