

Testimony in Support of House Bill 7984
An Act Relating To Public Finance – Independent Performance and Efficiency Audit
of the Rhode Island Department Of Transportation

March 3, 2026

Chairman Shanley and members of the Committee:

My name is Zachary Gauthier. I live in Johnston, and I am reaching out because I care deeply about how our state is run. Living with cerebral palsy and using a wheelchair every day gives me a very real perspective on our roads and sidewalks. To me, they aren't just concrete; they are my path to independence.

I am asking you to support House Bill 7984. We need this independent audit of the Department of Transportation because we deserve to know the truth about where our money is going.

When projects get stuck or things aren't managed correctly, it is people like me who feel the effects most. If I cannot get where I need to go because of poor planning or wasted resources, I am being sidelined.

I have always said that for a law to matter, it needs to have real teeth. This bill gives us those teeth. It brings in outside professionals to "look under the hood" and make sure things are being done the right way. It is about making sure our tax dollars are managed with care and that accessibility is a priority, not an afterthought.

Chairman Shanley, please help move this bill forward. Let's make sure Rhode Island is working as hard as its people do.

Thank you for always taking the time to listen and for standing up for the disability community.

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