

# PROVIDENCE ----- -- STREETS COALITION

March 31, 2026

House Committee on State Government & Elections  
Chair, Rep. Evan Shanley  
House Lounge, State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Via E-Mail: [HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov)

**RE: Support, House Bill 7576**

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections,

I am writing today on behalf of the Providence Streets Coalition, a nonprofit organization that advocates for safer streets, better transportation choices, and policies that advance mobility justice.

A few years ago, volunteers with our organization wanted to put together an interactive map of traffic crashes — a visualization of every traffic crash involving someone walking or biking who had been hit by a driver in Providence. Naturally, we went to RIDOT to request the data. RIDOT refused our APRA request, and cited a “longstanding policy” of complying with federal law by withholding crash data, but no such federal law exists.

When we appealed, the AG’s office agreed that RIDOT did have the discretion to withhold the data, but noted “It was not required to do so. We strongly encourage DOT to consider whether it may be in the public interest to disclose the requested information.” **That’s why we are enthusiastically supporting Rep. Kislak’s bill 7576 which would make this vital data available to the public.**

According to a [Rutgers University study published in 2025](#), **42 other states make crash data records available to the public.** Many state DOTs, such as [Massachusetts](#), maintain their own data portals so the public can see where crashes are occurring and work towards safety improvements that protect human life and limb. What we are asking for is not radical or malicious, it is common sense in our shared fight to make streets safer for all road users.

Undeterred by RIDOT’s refusal, we went to the City of Providence, whose police department recognized our interest in advocating for safer streets, and voluntarily disclosed their crash data. Today, you can go on our website and see [our interactive map of more than 4,000 individual](#)

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[crashes](#) over the last 15 years in the city of Providence, along with information about the conditions and injury severity.

Our Providence crash map demonstrates that community groups or academics can step in and assist with data projects when government agencies lack the resources or inclination to find the stories and the trends that are buried in the data.

But outside of Providence, Rhode Island residents are in the dark, and left to trust RIDOT when they say they alone are responsible for street safety. **This assertion of privilege presupposes that the public has no role to play in utilizing crash data to help advocate to make our roads safer.**

Since the loophole RIDOT exploits doesn't apply to local police departments, in 2025 we sought to expand on the success of the Providence map - we began requesting data from every city and town in the state. **Department after department told us while they can pull up an individual crash report, they cannot produce a report showing the comprehensive data table for their town. This makes RIDOT the defacto gatekeeper of all of the crash data in Rhode Island.**

When government hides information like crash data from the public, [it's not just advocates and journalists who suffer](#). It's every Rhode Islander who walks, bikes, drives, or relies on public transportation or emergency services. It's every family seeking answers after a tragedy. It's every voter trying to hold public institutions accountable.

**Rhode Island should not remain a national outlier in secrecy.** Unfortunately, RIDOT has a track record of keeping secrets from the public: throughout the Washington Bridge scandal, the 6/10 contaminated soil dumping, the grove of 100+ year old trees recently mistakenly cut down on Elmwood Avenue, and more. RIDOT even required RIPTA to sign a nondisclosure agreement when obtaining crash data for the purposes of creating statewide safety plans. Why?

The public records reforms in Rep. Kislak's bill 7576 are an essential step toward the open government we all need and deserve. I urge you to support this effort.

Respectfully,

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