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From: Zach Fratus <zachfratus92@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2026 2:23 PM
To: Senate Finance
Subject: Support for RIPTA Funding and Opposition to Service Reductions on Routes 21, 22, 23, and 30

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April 2, 2026

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Chairperson Louis P. DiPalma

Senate Committee on Finance

Rhode Island State House

82 Smith Street

Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairperson DiPalma and Members of the Committee:

My name is Zachary Fratus, and I am a resident of West Warwick. I am writing to you today to respectfully urge the committee to support sustainable, long-term funding for the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) and to express my deep concern regarding the recent service reductions across the state.

While I recognize that these budget shortfalls have affected dozens of routes, I want to emphasize the profound daily impact these cuts have on individuals with disabilities. As a resident who is legally blind and hearing-impaired, I cannot operate a vehicle. I rely entirely on taking the RIPTA, walking, or getting rides from my mom and dad to maintain my independence. The severe frequency reductions and schedule changes specifically on Routes 21, 22, 23, and 30 have fundamentally disrupted my ability to safely and reliably navigate my community.

I utilize a Transit Royale subscription to track my buses and plan my schedule efficiently, but the app cannot compensate for a lack of physical buses on the road. When service on Routes 22 and 23 is drastically reduced or eliminated on weekends, and schedules on Routes 21 and 30 become unreliable, my primary lifeline is severed. The situation is equally dire during the week; for instance, Route 23 service departing from the CCRI Warwick campus is now completely cut off at 6:15 PM on weekdays, stranding evening commuters. Because of these transit disruptions, what is only a 15-minute commute by car takes me 42 minutes—and sometimes much longer—just to get to work.

Rhode Islanders should not be punished for taking public transit instead of driving around. It is disheartening to see the state readily allocate \$41.3 million for a new State Police barracks in West Greenwich while simultaneously underfunding the essential transit network that working residents rely on every single day.

I am increasingly forced to walk long distances or depend heavily on my parents for basic transportation needs that the state's transit system is designed to fulfill. Allocating adequate funds to restore and

protect these specific routes is not just a budgetary issue; it is a matter of civil rights, economic participation, and basic independence for Rhode Islanders like myself.

I respectfully request that the committee prioritize full funding for RIPTA to prevent any further degradation of these essential services. I appreciate your time, your service to the State of Rhode Island, and your careful consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

Zachary J. Fratus