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From: A. I. <aizenstark@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 5:00 PM
To: Senate Finance
Subject: SUPPORT (S2825) - \$5 million Budget Allocation for RIPTA

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Dear Senate Chair DiPalma and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Amanda Izenstark, I live in Providence, and I am writing in support of Bill S2825, Sen. McKenney's \$5M allocation to reverse RIPTA's service cuts.

I commute from Providence to Kingston every workday via RIPTA. I have been riding RIPTA since I moved to Rhode Island in 2000.

Before the most recent round of cuts, I could make it **door-to-door in an hour and 45 minutes each way**.

Now, my commute takes 2-2.5 hours each way.

Before: There was a 66 bus every half hour, and buses to my neighborhood every 30-35 minutes.

Now: The 66 runs every 45-60 minutes, meaning that if I miss a bus or have to stay a little late, I don't get home for more than an hour later than usual because it's harder to make connections later in the evening.

Before: Buses were often full, but not standing room only.

Now: Since there are **fewer buses and more demand due to increasing fuel costs**, riders are forced to stand as the bus continues down routes 2, 4, and 95.

I am not alone in feeling these effects. The service cuts have been devastating for tens of thousands of riders like me. A [report](#) released by the Save RIPTA coalition found that since the service cuts went into effect in September 2025:

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- Ridership dropped 12.1% or about 125,000 trips by November
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- Riders are burdened with less reliable and frequent service — restricting access to jobs, healthcare, education, and recreation.
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- 30% of RIPTA riders are at risk of losing employment, 8% lost pay, and 3.6% lost their jobs directly
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- RIPTA operators' working conditions have deteriorated
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- RIPTA service has gotten 29% more expensive to operate per service hour
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'Public Transit' is mentioned no less than 80 times in Rhode Island's own strategic plans for [economic development](#), [housing production](#), and [climate](#). However, the service cuts have left RIPTA too small and crippled to even meet the needs of its existing riders, let alone expand to strengthen our state's competitiveness and livability.

Finally, **RIPTA is crucial to affordability in Rhode Island**. The costs of car ownership and insurance are high and increasing, leading some residents to illegally forgo registration and insurance, or assume significant debt. Making RIPTA more reliable and frequent means people do not need to own cars to get to work, school, healthcare, and recreation. Instead, they have more money they can save or spend locally.

That's why I'm urging you to support S2825. Without reversing RIPTA's devastating service cuts, RIPTA cannot meet the needs of a growing population that requires affordable and sustainable transportation, and RIPTA cannot grow to meet our climate, social justice, and economic goals.

Sincerely,

Amanda Izenstark
Providence, RI 02908