

Testimony in SUPPORT OF Senate Bill S. 2825: \$5M Budget allocation to RIPTA

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to you today to express my unwavering support for this bill that would reverse the cuts to RIPTA services made in the last fiscal year.

I am not a bus rider, but I understand the value of a strong public transit system. I tend to think you do, too. I'm sure you're aware of how strong public transit systems attract businesses, aid in productivity and serve as a lifeline to our most needy. I'm sure you've heard how bus ridership has dropped with these cuts due to service lines being eliminated entirely or drastically cut.

I don't believe the State really wants to make travel harder for its people. However, that's exactly what's happening. The State says it supports public transit. The State says it understands the value of public transit as a tool to aid in economic development, housing development and the battle against climate change. There's even bills to eliminate parking requirements to make the construction of housing more affordable for builders. But how does that help the people when there are no busses to catch or bus routes don't run nearly often enough to service the people.

Cutting funding doesn't increase ridership. Providing services in the places needed at the times needed is what increases ridership. You have to build it – not break it down.

I am respectfully requesting this bill be passed. This will show me and the rest of RI that our government isn't simply providing lip service, but doing what needs to be done to serve our people and create a brighter future for us all.

Sincerely,
Lisa Jones
Providence