

SAVE RIPTA

PVDStreets.org/Save-RIPTA

April 2nd, 2026
Senate Committee on Finance
RE: Support S2825

Dear Chair DiPalma and Committee Members,

I am writing today on behalf of the 32 members of the [Save RIPTA Coalition](#) to express our strong support for Sen. McKenney's S2825, the \$5M allocation to reverse RIPTA's service cuts. The Coalition urges this committee to support increased funding for RIPTA to undo the devastating service cuts from the fall of 2025. RIPTA is a critical part of Rhode Island's transportation system, connecting individuals across the state with economic opportunities, education, and vital services.

Rhode Island has the potential for a world class public transit system, and yet for generations we have left bus service to languish and bus riders to bear the burden of unreliable service and infrequent or nonexistent buses. In September 2025, after years of being forced to operate with limited, unsustainable funding, RIPTA was dealt a final blow: Governor McKee's crusade to "right-size" RIPTA resulted in the largest service cuts in its history and a sharp drop in ridership followed. I encourage you to review our [Service Cuts Impact Report](#) as well as watch the [Bus Cuts](#) short documentary film which chronicles the burden these service cuts have placed on riders across the state.

The service cuts have been devastating for tens of thousands of riders and the hundreds of drivers and support staff. The [report](#) released found that since the service cuts went into effect in September 2025:

- Ridership dropped 12.1% or about 125,000 trips by November
- Riders are burdened with less reliable and frequent service - restricting access to jobs, healthcare, education, and recreation.
- 30% of RIPTA riders are at risk of losing employment, 8% lost pay, and 3.6% lost their jobs directly
- RIPTA operators' working conditions have deteriorated
- RIPTA service has gotten 29% more expensive to operate per service hour

The report also illustrates the consequences that RIPTA riders and workers are now suffering. Through surveys and ridership data obtained through public records requests, Save RIPTA's publication illustrates the wide ranging toll that cuts to bus service have had on members of the traveling public. Riders have lost their jobs and been forced to work fewer hours; lost access to educational opportunities and been chronically late to school; and are cut off from religious, commercial, and civic engagement - especially on weekends. Drivers are being forced to handle overcrowding, running behind schedule, have less recovery time between routes, and are physically and mentally overwhelmed. *A copy of the report is attached to this message.*

'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.

The much anticipated and now complete efficiency study told us what we already knew: Before the service cuts RIPTA was doing as well or better than its peers at providing efficient service with the resources it was provided. It was not in need of "right sizing," rather it was in need of investment and expansion.

We urge you to support S2825 and restore the devastating cuts to a vital service for Rhode Island. Let's prioritize RIPTA as an essential piece of state infrastructure that gets people where they need to go and drives our economy and community forward.



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