



**Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP)**  
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To: House Finance Committee  
From: Raymond Gagne Jr , RI Organizing Project  
Re: HB7774- Support.

Dear Chairman Abney and House Finance Committee Members.

I am writing to urge your support for HB7774. The bill sponsored by Representative Alzate will provide funding to eliminate RIPTA's budget deficit, increase bus drivers' salaries, and expand services in outlying areas.

I am writing in my capacity as the Director of the RI Organizing Project (RIOP). RIOP has been working on transportation issues for the past 10 years. We work primarily with low-income elderly and disabled bus riders. The bus riders we work with depend upon RIPTA for their daily transportation needs. A reduction in bus service due to RIPTA's impending deficit would be devastating to the elderly and disabled. It would make it more difficult for them to go food shopping, get to medical appointments, and visit with family and friends.

HB7774 will also provide funding to expand RIPTA's service. The bus riders we work with in the Metro Providence area express the need for more frequent bus service and expansion of night and weekend service. Bus riders in underserved areas outside of Providence express a need for additional bus routes to help address their daily transportation needs.

Listed below are quotes from the community members we work with about the importance of RIPTA.

"RIPTA helps me to go to the doctors and food shopping. My dad also uses RIPTA to go to the doctors. I have asthma and it is hard for me to get around. I cannot walk far without being out of breath. I hope they do not cut the service. I depend upon RIPTA" Barbara Buxton from West Warwick.

"RIPTA gets me where I want to go. I am a Vet and need to go to the VA in Providence. Cabs are problematic if I have a lot of appointments. With RIPTA I can go to my appointments with no problems. There are a lot of other vets and disable people that depend upon RIPTA. "Robert Hunter from Newport.

"I depend upon RIPTA. I am not able to drive. I use both the RIDE and the regular bus service. I bought my home in Providence because RIPTA goes by my house. I called RIPTA three times to make sure I would have service by my house. I looked at two houses in Johnston that were less expensive but could not buy them because they had no RIPTA service." Barbara Henry from Providence.

"I live at Donovan Manor in Newport. RIPTA needs more funding. The people in my building have not been taking RIPTA as much because it is less reliable. They are afraid of missing their appointments. They need RIPTA to remain independent but cannot if the buses are not dependable. "Sherman Pines from Newport.

"We have no other transportation. We rely on RIPTA for everyday activities. The homeless and disabled depend upon RIPTA to find housing, visit their case managers, and attend soup kitchens. If the wrong routes are cut people could miss multiple appointments. "Wendy Thomas from Providence.

"RIPTA saves my life as well as others. Not everyone can afford a car. I need RIPTA to go to appointments and buy food. RIPTA is a life saving necessity. "Deborah Wray from Providence.

"RIPTA is my only transportation. I go to the doctors and shopping. RIPTA is my car." Barbara Thompson from Providence.

Thank you for your time. In closing, I am once again asking for your support of HB7774 .

Sincerely,  
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