Testimony #1

As someone who has taken the bus for over three years, I can say it has cons: it's almost always packed, you have to hope it comes on time, and you have to hope it doesn't skip you.

But it also has its pros: it allows you to get to where you need to go for free if you're a high schooler or just for a small fee. Speaking from experience it can come in handy when you need to get somewhere in a short amount of time or when it's dark and you don't want to walk home alone.

With the RIPTA budget cuts, It's made it harder to rely on it especially with the removal of certain bus stops, no weekend service, and no holiday services. It made it so that even if you wanted to take the bus at night on a weekend, depending on where you needed to go, you still had to walk, which meant that if you were in an unsafe area, you still had to walk through it alone.

The continuous budget cuts to something that also helps high schoolers get to school and home every day disappoint me, and the budget cuts and what they do can and will affect the attendance rate of many high schoolers; fewer and fewer bus stops and having to wait longer and longer for the bus will affect people's ability to get to work or school on time.

Helena Foulkes, who is running for governor, is expected to fill the position and has proposed to allocate "15 million dollars" to fund routes for RIPTA. With her making that proposal, I hope she will commit to it because we need the bus to be available for everyone who needs it, and if it's not what is it for? I hope Foulkes is able to PUBLICLY commit to the funding RIPTA and apply the allocated funds in her FY28 budget proposal. I also hope that she will continue to make efforts to improve transit and make it more accessible for everyone.

- Sincerely, a RIPTA rider.

Testimony #2

As a student and regular RIPTA rider, I have experienced how changes to bus schedules and routes affect my ability to get around Providence. My bus used to arrive every 30–40 minutes, but now it can take nearly an hour or longer between buses. On top of that, the route has been extended to accommodate workers traveling to Amazon facilities, making an already long commute even longer for other riders. While providing transportation for workers is important, it should not come at the expense of the students, families, and everyday riders who also depend on these routes.

These delays are especially difficult after school, when students are trying to get home. Missing a bus can mean waiting another hour or more for the next one, to the point where walking sometimes feels like the more reasonable option. Public transportation should make our lives more accessible, not make getting home feel like another obstacle in our day. Reliable and

frequent public transportation is essential for students, workers, and families who do not have other transportation options. Fully funding RIPTA and the Transit Master Plan is an investment in the people who rely on these services every single day. We deserve a system that allows us to get where we need to go without having to plan our entire day around a bus schedule.

Testimony #3

As a high school student and a RIPTA rider, I need a reliable source of transportation. I don't think RIPTA is anywhere near that. If I'm coming home a little later than usual from work or school, 5-6 PM, I have to wait around 30 minutes for a bus to come to my stop. It's frankly an inconvenience and unsafe, a minor shouldn't have to wait at Kennedy Plaza for an extended amount of time in the cold and dark. Please, for me and the thousands of other RIPTA riders, please take us into consideration this year.

Testimony #4

For the past 3 years taking RIPTA most days isn't just about getting from point A to point B it's how I get to and from my education, how I get to after-school activities, and how I access my community. Relying on public transit as a student means that every delayed, postponed, or cancelled bus directly affects my day, making it harder to get to school or an event on time and manage my schedule. When RIPTA is underfunded it directly limits opportunities for me and others of youth across Rhode Island who depend on it every single day.