

# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 59

Approved February 10, 2017

WHEREAS, For the last 40 years, the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) has provided free bus rides to our state's low-income, elderly, and disabled residents; and

WHEREAS, An estimated 13,000 Rhode Islanders utilize the RIPTA free bus program; and

WHEREAS, Many of these individuals lack other means of transportation and many have mobility issues as well, leaving them dependent upon public transportation to get where they need to go, whether it be to their jobs, doctors' appointments, or when simply running errands; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, the State budget eliminated the free bus program for low-income, elderly, and disabled residents, instituting a reduced fare system instead; and

WHEREAS, The fare increase on this vulnerable population came into effect on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that this fare increase will cost Rhode Island's low-income, elderly, and disabled residents nearly \$1.5 million each year; and

WHEREAS, Many of the residents who utilize the no fare program are on fixed incomes, meaning that any increase in their expenses will force them to reduce their spending on other necessities such as food, medicine, and housing; and

WHEREAS, The elected officials of Rhode Island have a responsibility to protect and promote the well-being of our state's most vulnerable residents; and

WHEREAS, While it is important to recognize the fiscal pressures on the State and RIPTA, it is morally reprehensible to balance the budget on the backs of residents who are already struggling to make ends meet; and

WHEREAS, Reinstating the no fare bus program for low-income, elderly, and disabled residents would send a strong message about Rhode Island's commitment building a just, fair, and equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Providence does hereby urge the General Assembly reinstate the no fare bus program for low-income, elderly, and disabled residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, and the entire Providence delegation in the General Assembly.

IN CITY COUNCIL

FEB 02 2017

READ AND PASSED

PRES.

CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

Mayor

Date:

2/10/17