



SEPTA Youth Advisory Council Press Statement

November 18, 2025

Philadelphia, PA, Nov 18 – The SEPTA Youth Advisory Council registers our deep disappointment with the 2025-26 Pennsylvania State Budget that was passed on November 12, 2025 in which the Commonwealth fails to dedicate new funding for our region's public transit system. This failure condemns hundreds of thousands of Philadelphians to a transit system that continues to suffer from chronic underinvestment.

This budget diverts over \$665 million for highway improvements and \$1 billion for highway maintenance, increasing overall transportation spending by more than \$100 million, yet allocates none of those additional funds to public transit. This budget places not only SEPTA, but transit agencies across Pennsylvania at risk of service cuts at a time when ridership continues to recover steadily post pandemic.

State officials frequently cite safety, reliability, and accountability when discussing SEPTA, yet they ignore the progress already made: stronger cleaning practices, increased transit police presence, reduced fare evasion, higher customer satisfaction, and continued systemwide improvements. These gains are impossible to maintain without stable state investment. It is an unreasonable and ultimately untenable practice to routinely blame SEPTA for its shortcomings while refusing to acknowledge or give credit when the agency meets and often exceeds the goals set by elected officials.

As witnessed earlier this year, transit funding inaction has already forced SEPTA to divert existing, limited capital resources to fund operations which posed immediate accessibility and reliability issues for the hundreds of thousands of transit riders in the Southeastern Pennsylvania region that faced a month of



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service cuts and unpredictable commutes. The direction from PennDOT to shift funds that were intended for capital projects to instead cover operating costs was counterproductive. It reflected yet another troubling indication that the General Assembly lacks the commitment to improving public transit and the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Public transit is essential infrastructure and deserves to see a larger part of the returns it generates and contributes to the social and economic prosperity of the state. The Commonwealth cannot afford another year of deferral or indifference. The SEPTA YAC calls on our elected leaders to act immediately and secure a sustainable, recurring transit funding stream that protects SEPTA and transit agencies across the state from further crisis and ensures a safe, reliable, and equitable system for all.

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