



Michael E. Correia  
Chief of Police

# Barrington Police Department

## Public Safety Building

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Philip Hervey  
Town Manager

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May 20, 2025

House Finance Committee Rhode Island General Assembly

State House

Providence, RI

RE: Support for H5527 and S0429 – Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) for Children and Youth

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I write in support of H5527, which would establish a sustainable, statewide Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) program. Law enforcement officers are frequently called to respond to youth experiencing behavioral health crises, yet we recognize that police intervention is not always the best solution. MRSS provides an effective, trauma-informed alternative that ensures children receive immediate behavioral health support without unnecessary law enforcement involvement.

When emergency personnel are dispatched to a child in crisis, the presence of uniformed officers and emergency vehicles can escalate fear and distress—both for the child and their family. This can lead to increased resistance, the use of restraints, or, in some cases, justice system involvement for youth who would be better served by mental health professionals. MRSS reduces these risks by deploying trained behavioral health responders who can de-escalate situations safely and provide follow-up care, preventing repeated crises.

Since its implementation, Family Service of Rhode Island and Tides Family Services, providers of MRSS since 2022, have successfully diverted over 90% of the children the program serves from hospitalization or other high-intensity interventions. This means fewer 911 calls, fewer police-involved incidents, and a more appropriate crisis response for youth in need. MRSS allows law enforcement to focus on public safety while ensuring children receive the right care at the right time.



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We urge you to support H5527 to make MRSS a permanent resource for Rhode Island families. This legislation will reduce traumatic interventions, decrease unnecessary law enforcement involvement, and ensure that children receive compassionate, community-based care.

Sincerely,

Colonel Michael E. Correia  
Chief of Police  
Barrington Police Department  
100 Federal Road  
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