



May 12, 2026

**SEIU 1199NE Position in Support of H-8490 – Noreen Drexel Birthing Center Fund Act
(House Finance Committee)**

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee:

On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, representing thousands of healthcare and social service workers across Rhode Island—including frontline caregivers at Women & Infants Hospital—I write in support of H-8490, the Noreen Drexel Birthing Center Fund Act.

The Newport Hospital birthing center provides essential access to labor and delivery services for families in Newport County. If these services are reduced or eliminated, patients will be redirected to other facilities, including Women & Infants Hospital. Our members at Women & Infants already care for a high volume of births each year, including many high-risk pregnancies. An increase in patients due to a closure in Newport would put additional pressure on staffing and capacity and could impact the delivery of care.

Maintaining local birthing services helps ensure that patients can access care without unnecessary delays or complications related to travel. This is especially important in urgent or high-risk situations where time and proximity matter.

This legislation can help stabilize services in the short term, but it must also lead to a clear, long-term plan. We believe it is critical that Brown University Health make a firm commitment to maintaining 24/7 labor and delivery services at Newport Hospital. A temporary funding solution without a long-term commitment will not provide the stability that patients, caregivers, and the community need.

We urge the Committee to support H-8490 and to ensure that it results in a sustained commitment to these services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Moore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "e".

Alex Moore

Political Director

SEIU 1199NE

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