



**CITY OF NEWPORT
FIRE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF**



Date: May 12, 2026
To: Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,
Subject: **Request Support for Bill H8490, the "Noreen Drexel Birthing Center Fund Act."**

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Newport Hospital birthing center is a critical community healthcare resource that allows women and families to access safe, high-quality maternity care close to home. H8490 creates a collaborative funding model between the State of Rhode Island, Brown Health, and the philanthropic community to stabilize and strengthen these services while ensuring accountability, transparency, and long-term planning.

This bill recognizes that access to local birthing services is not only a healthcare issue, but also, a matter of public health, family well-being, and regional equity. I encourage the committee to support H8490 and help secure the long-term sustainability of the Newport Hospital birthing center.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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