



DONALD R. GREBIEN
MAYOR



April 27, 2026

The Honorable Chairman Marvin Abney
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for H8180 – Children’s Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)

Good afternoon Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of H8180, legislation that would establish a statewide Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) program for children and youth across Rhode Island.

As Mayor of the City of Pawtucket, I see firsthand the growing need for accessible, timely, and coordinated behavioral health services for our young people and their families. H8180 represents a critical step forward in building a comprehensive, community-based crisis response system that meets children where they are - at home, in school, and in their neighborhoods.

At the heart of this legislation is a thoughtful and strategic braided funding model that aligns Medicaid, commercial insurance, and state general revenue into a unified structure. This approach ensures that services are delivered based on clinical need, not insurance status, eliminating the fragmentation that too often creates barriers to care. For communities like Pawtucket, where many families face economic challenges or gaps in coverage, this model is essential to ensuring equitable access and continuity of care.

Behavioral health crises involving children are unpredictable and require immediate, around-the-clock response without burdens such as prior authorization or cost-sharing. By coordinating multiple funding streams, H8180 will help stabilize provider networks, maximize federal resources, and ensure that no child is turned away due to lack of coverage. Without this kind of approach, we risk continued strain on emergency departments, unnecessary hospitalizations, and missed opportunities to intervene early and effectively.

Importantly, this legislation also aligns Rhode Island with national best practices by advancing a “no wrong door” system of care, one that allows families to access the right support at the right time, regardless of where they first seek help. Investing in MRSS as a reliable front door to the behavioral health system will reduce reliance on higher-cost, institutional care and lead to better long-term outcomes for children and families.

On behalf of the City of Pawtucket, I respectfully urge the Committee to support H8180 and take this important step toward strengthening our state's behavioral health system for children and youth.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to improving behavioral health services for children and youth in our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donald R. Grebien". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Donald" being the most prominent part.

Donald R. Grebien
Mayor
City of Pawtucket