

Testimony in Support of H8180 – Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)

Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Lindsay Tougas, and I am a barre instructor at a studio North Kingstown, Rhode Island. I am writing in strong support of H8180 and the continued support of Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) for children and families across our state.

In my work within the community and in my interactions with the mothers and caretakers who come in to take a class and have a moment to decompress, I have heard firsthand how many families are struggling. Parents are overwhelmed, children are carrying significant trauma and emotional stress, and many families do not know where to turn when a child is in crisis.

Some of those parents have recounted their experiences where MRSS made a difference at a critical moment.

Instead of a child ending up in an emergency room, interacting with police, or being removed from their home, trained professionals were able to respond quickly, help de-escalate the situation, support the family, and connect them to ongoing services and supports.

What stands out most to me about MRSS is that it treats families with compassion and respect. Families are not judged during some of their hardest moments. They are supported.

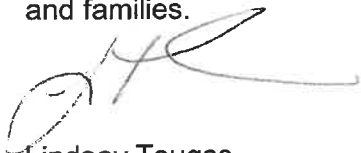
As a community member, I also see how these crises ripple far beyond the home. They impact schools, neighborhoods, healthcare systems, first responders, and community organizations. When families cannot access timely support, everyone feels the impact.

Services like MRSS help stabilize not only children, but entire families and communities.

Rhode Island has made important progress in strengthening children's behavioral health services, but families still face significant barriers accessing care quickly when they need it most. MRSS helps bridge that gap by providing immediate, community-based support that keeps children connected to their homes, schools, and support systems.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support H8180 and continue investing in services that help children and families before crises escalate into larger tragedies.

Thank you for your time and consideration and for your commitment to Rhode Island's children and families.



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