



Mayor of Providence

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Brett P. Smiley

May 14, 2026

The Honorable Marvin, L. Abney Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Abney, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I support House Bill 8180, *An Act relating to State Affairs and Government – Children’s Mobile Response and Stabilization Services*. If passed, this legislation would create a statewide Children’s Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) program which is crucial in addressing the growing behavioral health needs of children and youth in our community and across the state.

As local leaders, we witness firsthand the strain placed on our emergency services and public safety resources when children experience behavioral health crises. Currently, in the absence of alternative resources, families often must rely on emergency responders, including law enforcement and EMTs, to manage behavioral health crises, which can be costly and traumatic for both the child and their family. Additionally, these interventions often do not address the underlying needs of the child, further perpetuating the cycle of crisis. The MRSS program provides a much-needed alternative by offering timely, community-based interventions that prevent children from being unnecessarily funneled into emergency rooms or law enforcement systems. By sending trained behavioral health professionals directly to the location of the child in crisis, this program avoids costly emergency responses and reduces the need for emergency personnel deployment.

This program is not only an investment in the well-being of our children and families, but also a cost-effective solution that can help municipalities reduce unnecessary resource deployments while ensuring children in crisis receive the appropriate care and support. I respectfully urge the committee to vote in favor of House Bill 8180.

Sincerely,

Brett P. Smiley  
Mayor