

4/7/26

To whom it may concern,

Please accept this written testimony in support of the Birthing Center at Newport Hospital (HR 7272 and HR 7626).

I'm writing to express my deep concern about the potential closure of the Birthing Center at Newport Hospital. As someone who has worked at Newport Hospital for 10 years, and who has delivered both of my children at Newport Hospital, I urge you to fight to keep this essential care center open.

**I cannot stress how vital this unit is for our community.**

The closure would put mothers and babies at risk by forcing them to travel far from the island for labor and delivery. For our community, this isn't just inconvenient - it's dangerous in an emergency or if the bridges off the island are closed, as we saw during the blizzard in February.

Many of our friends and family members have given birth at this center. We also have friends who work in the unit and show up every day to support local women with care, compassion, and clinical excellence. This place matters and is an essential resource for our community.

Please do everything you can to keep the Birthing Center at Newport Hospital open and prioritize maternal care for island and coastal families.

Thank you for standing up for maternal health in Rhode Island. This means the world to us.

Sincerely,  
Shaelyn Bouchard