

Steven Sepe

From: Rachel Crocroft <rcocroft@cox.net>
Sent: Saturday, April 4, 2026 5:40 PM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Subject: Newport Hospital Birthing Center is essential to Newport

You don't often get email from rcocroft@cox.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Chair and Members of the House Health Committee:

Newport Hospital must offer essential health care services to pregnant women and their newborns for their health and safety. It is absolutely necessary that Newport Hospital have a birthing center for the viability of the City of Newport. Young people who may want to start families will be put off moving to a city with a birthing center off the island in Providence. I know from experience what it's like to have to give birth in Providence. I delivered in 1980 after a scary drive off island to Providence at 3am in January.

I write in strong support of H8203, H7272 and H7627. Access to local maternity care is a fundamental component of public health infrastructure. When birthing services are reduced or eliminated without meaningful transparency and review, families and communities bear the consequences.

H8203 ties strings to any money that Brown Health receives from the taxpayer money from the State of Rhode Island. If Brown Health receives any money from the state of Rhode Island to ensure essential health care services for Rhode Islanders, it must keep the Newport Hospital Birthing Center open.

H7272 strengthens oversight by requiring clear financial justification, public notice, and Department of Health approval before a birthing center can be closed or materially reduced. These safeguards ensure that decisions impacting maternal and newborn care are made transparently and with full consideration of community needs.

This bill does not prevent responsible health system management — it ensures accountability when essential services are at stake.

H7626 ensures that maternal health data, workforce development, and equity initiatives are integrated into long-term state policy rather than temporary initiatives.

Maternal health outcomes reflect the strength of our healthcare system as a whole. This bill provides the stability and accountability necessary to improve outcomes for mothers and infants statewide.

I respectfully urge passage.

Sincerely,

Rachel Cocroft

54 Powel Ave., Newport, RI