

## Steven Sepe

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**From:** Elisabeth Larson <eal254@cornell.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 11:07 AM  
**To:** House Health and Human Services Committee  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of in H8203, H7272 and H7627.

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Dear Chair and Members of the House Health Committee:

I am writing in strong support of H8203, H7272 and H7627, for the health of all birthing people and their offspring on Aquidneck Island.

My name is Dr. Elisabeth Anne Larson and I'm a Newport native. I was born at the Newport Hospital Birthing Center in 1991 via emergency c-section under general anesthesia. Neither my mom nor I would be alive if not for the birthing center, its care team, and the proximity of our home to the hospital.

I am also a perinatal health scientist. I recently defended my PhD in Maternal and Child health at Cornell University and I am joining an OBGYN/Maternal Fetal Medicine research team at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital in the fall.

As such, I am uniquely positioned to speak on the importance of the long-term security of the Birthing Center for the health of Newport County.

I urge you to first consider what happens to the recommended 30 minute 'decision-to-delivery' window for cesarean birth if women need to travel 45 minutes before the decision-making process can begin? The obvious answer is that the window doesn't get met, but the nuance behind this is that longer distance to hospital center is associated with increased risk of neonatal death and poorer APGAR scores,<sup>2</sup> resulting in poorer infant outcomes for Brown Health.

This ultimately hurts your bottom line. Reduced access to labor and delivery care leads to higher rates of emergency interventions, longer NICU stays, and higher emergency transport costs, all of which increase the burden on the healthcare system.

From a practical standpoint, Brown Health reported nearly 5 billion in revenue for FY25 with an almost 1% operating margin – leaving you an operating margin of roughly 50 million. The 5 million per year required to sustain the Birthing Center is nominal compared to your profits, but the benefits to the Newport County community and the healthcare system are outsized.

Again, I urge you to consider passing these bills.

Kindly,  
Elisabeth Anne Larson, PhD

1. Chukwudi OE, Okonkwo CA. Decision - delivery interval and perinatal outcome of emergency caesarean sections at a tertiary institution. *Pak J Med Sci.* 2014 Sep;30(5):946-50. doi: 10.12669/pjms.305.5470. PMID: 25225504; PMCID: PMC4163209.

2. Niyitegeka J, Nshimirimana G, Silverstein A, Odhiambo J, Lin Y, Nkurunziza T, Riviello R, Rulisa S, Banguti P, Magge H, Macharia M, Habimana R, Hedt-Gauthier B. Longer travel time to district hospital worsens neonatal outcomes: a retrospective cross-sectional study of the effect of delays in receiving emergency cesarean section in Rwanda. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth.* 2017 Jul 25;17(1):242. doi: 10.1186/s12884-017-1426-1. PMID: 28743257; PMCID: PMC5526290.