

My name is Kristin Harper, I am a teacher and resident of Portsmouth, RI. My son is almost 3-months old. I am here to share my personal experience in support of H8203, H7272, and H7627—and how Newport Hospital’s Birthing Center saved my life.

In January 2026, I went in for a routine induction at 40 weeks and 6 days. What followed was rare and life-threatening. When my water broke, my placenta abruptly detached, causing a severe hemorrhage.

Because of the care at Newport, my nurse, Elizabeth, immediately recognized that something was wrong when my son’s heart rate dropped. Within minutes, the entire team was mobilized. After a failed vacuum-assisted delivery, Dr. Silverberg looked me in the eyes and told me we needed an emergency C-section to save both me and my baby. I trusted him completely because of the care and relationship he had built with me. As I was wheeled to the OR, my husband that he would never see me alive again.

While doctors worked for three hours to stop the bleeding, perform transfusions, and treat life-threatening complications, the nurse Maeve stayed with my husband and taught him to care for our newborn son, not knowing if I was alive or dead. I spent days in the ICU—but what stands out most is not just that they saved my life, it’s how I was cared for afterward.

Nurses, especially Taylor, advocated for me to hospital management see my newborn while I was in the ICU - helping me to begin breastfeeding despite everything my body had been through. That level of coordinated, compassionate care changed the course of my recovery and likely prevented severe postpartum depression. Ask anyone else here today – they’ll tell you the exact names of the nurses who helped them, who held them in joy and despair.

This is what comprehensive, well-supported maternal care looks like. And it is exactly what is at risk.

The United States already has one of the highest maternal mortality rates among developed nations. Rhode Island cannot afford to reduce access or shift more patients into already overburdened systems.                      These bills directly address that.

H8203 ensures that state funding is actually directed toward essential healthcare services like maternal care. H7627 supports long-term solutions through workforce development, data transparency, and equity initiatives—because we cannot fix what we do not measure or invest in. And H7272 strengthens financial oversight and accountability, so critical services like Newport’s Birthing Center are not quietly reduced or eliminated without public review.

Without these protections, we risk losing access to timely, life-saving care—not just in Newport, but across the entire region. That means more strain on emergency rooms, paramedics, and hospitals that are already operating at capacity.

Maternal health is not a niche issue—it affects entire families, entire communities, and the long-term health of our state.

At another hospital, my son might have survived—but I might not have.

I am asking you to ensure that other families do not have to rely on luck. Please support these bills, protect access to essential maternal care, and keep Newport’s Birthing Center open and properly funded.

Thank you.