



Conexión Latina

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April 8, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Rebekah Gomez and I am the Executive Director of Conexión Latina, an organization that supports the Latino community on Aquidneck Island. I write today to express my support for bills H8203, H7272 and H7627. I would like to give you the viewpoint of this issue for the many Latina women and families on Aquidneck Island that have delivered their babies at The Noreen Stoner Drexel Birthing Center at Newport Hospital. Several women have shared their birthing stories with me, and given me permission to advocate on their behalf.

Local access to a top rated, state of the art birthing center has been an unwavering support for the Latino community since they have been on Aquidneck Island. It is a place where they are treated with respect, kindness, and receive top quality care, but the overall theme that was shared with me is that they felt comfortable and at home during one of the most difficult and scary moments in their lives. Access to this kind of local maternity care is a fundamental component of public health infrastructure. When birthing services are reduced or eliminated without care, without fully understanding the consequences that EVERYBODY will suffer, and without review, municipal infrastructure will struggle, families and communities will crumble, and lives will be lost.

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

I have attached the short stories of women in our community. I hope they are as impactful to you as they were to me and they move you to pass bills H8203, H7272 and H7627.

Rebekah Gomez
Executive Director, Conexión Latina, Newport RI

Me gustaría compartir mi experiencia en el Hospital Newport, donde di a luz el 3 de febrero de 2014. Estuve ingresada cuatro días debido a una cesárea; las enfermeras y los médicos fueron muy profesionales y amables. Mi familia no hablaba inglés, pero les resultó muy fácil venir a visitarme y traer a mis otros hijos para que conocieran al recién nacido. Solo puedo decir que tuve una experiencia muy agradable y que estoy muy agradecida por cómo nos cuidaron a mí y a mi bebé.

I would like to share my experience at Newport hospital where I gave birth on February 3, 2014. I stayed 4 days due to a C-section, the nurses and the doctors were professional and polite. My family did not speak English and it was accessible for them to visit and to bring my other children to meet the newborn. I can only say I had a very nice experience and I am very thankful for the way they took care of me and my baby.

Hola estoy viviendo en Newport y tuve dos bebés aquí en el hospital de Newport mi primer bebé lo tuve en octubre 2018 y mi segundo bebé lo tuve en febrero 2020 mi experiencia es que si me atendieron con amabilidad todo el personal estuvo atento durante el tiempo de parto así que estoy agradecida y pedimos yo y todas las mamás que no lo cierren ya que es muy importante para todas las mujeres embarazadas y para dar a Luz .

Hello, I live in Newport and I had two babies here at Newport Hospital. I had my first baby in October 2018 and my second baby in February 2020. My experience is that I was treated kindly and all the staff were attentive during the delivery, so I am grateful. I and all the mothers ask that The Birthing Center not be closed as it is very important for all pregnant women for giving birth.

Hola mi nombre es Débora Gomez nació el 4 de julio de 1994 mi bebé nació en el hospital de Newport en el 2019 y mi otra bebé nació en el 2022 para mí fue una experiencia muy bonita muy diferente a las anteriores en mi país a mí me gustó mucho los doctores son muy amables las enfermeras al igual y lo tratan muy bien a uno al menos a mí me trataron bien a mi bebé

Hello, my name is Débora Gomez. I was born on July 4, 1994. My baby was born at Newport Hospital in 2019, and my other baby was born in 2022. For me, it was a very beautiful experience, very different from previous ones in my country. I really liked it. The doctors are very kind, as are the nurses, and they treat you very well, at least they treated me and my baby well.

Hola soy marleni lopez nació mi bebe a finales de enero de 2026 en el hospital Newport por lo cual estoy muy feliz porque los doctor's me han tratado muy bien han sido muy amables todos y muy responsables de mi, estoy agradecida con dios por la existencia de este hospital no se que hubieramos hecho si lo hubieran cerrado gracias por su hermosa atención a mi persona.

Hello, I am Marleni Lopez. My baby was born at the end of January 2026 at Newport Hospital, which makes me very happy because the doctors treated me very well. They were all very kind and very responsible for me. I am grateful to God for the existence of this hospital. I don't know what we would have done if they had closed it. Thank you for your wonderful care of me.

Soy una mujer de 40 años, tengo tres preciosos hijos y hace casi 18 años nació mi primer hijo en el centro de maternidad del Hospital de Newport Rhode Island, recuerdo que fue toda una semana de dolores y caminé hacia el hospital por 15 minutos 3 veces en esa semana para obtener atención médica ya que mi hijo estaba por nacer. La atención era inmediata y muy eficiente, recuerdo la última vez cuando me dijeron "hoy si te quedas tu bebé nace hoy" fue una emoción grande y lloré de la alegría a pesar de los dolores, pues mi esposo también estaba enfermo en el hospital de Rhode Island y yo estaba sola dando a luz a mi hijo. Durante el parto una enfermera sostuvo mi mano y me dijo: no estás sola tú puedes, esa enfermera fue mi fuerza en ese momento. Todo el personal me asistió con mucha paciencia, amor, respeto y sobre todo mucho profesionalismo. Cerrar el centro de maternidad afectaría a muchas mujeres que como yo que en ese momento no tenía recursos ni contaba con un auto para transportarme hoy tienen que caminar para recibir asistencia. No me imagino todo el proceso que tendría que pasar una mujer con dolores de parto para trasladarse de una ciudad a otra para poder ser atendida, sería de mucho riesgo tanto para la madre como para el bebé. El centro de maternidad en el Hospital de Newport ayuda a que las madres reciban atención más rápida y por lo tanto la vida de ambos esté más segura.

I am a 40-year-old woman with three beautiful children. Almost 18 years ago, my first child was born at the maternity center of Newport Rhode Island Hospital. I remember it was a whole week of pain, and I walked to the hospital for 15 minutes three times that week to get medical attention because my son was about to be born.

The care was immediate and very efficient. I remember the last time when they told me, "If you stay today, your baby will be born today." It was a great thrill, and I cried with joy despite the pain.

It was a great emotion, and I cried with joy despite the pain, because my husband was also sick in the hospital in Rhode Island, and I was alone giving birth to my son.

During labor, a nurse held my hand and said, "You are not alone. You can do this."

That nurse was my strength at that moment. All the staff assisted me with great patience, love, respect, and above all, a lot of professionalism. Closing the maternity center would affect many women who, like me, did not have the resources or a car to transport themselves at that time and now have to walk to receive care. I can't imagine the whole process that a woman in labor would have to go through to travel from one city to another to be treated. It would be very risky for both the mother and the baby. The maternity center at Newport Hospital helps mothers receive faster care, making life safer for both of them.