

April 8, 2026

Dear Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

As a lifelong resident of Newport County, mother of two adult children born at Newport Hospital and retired health and human services executive, I am writing to you in strong support of House bills H8203, H7272 and H8203 concerning the Newport Hospital Birthing Center and maternal child health care in Rhode Island.

Members of the health profession have repeatedly given strong testimony regarding the importance of having a birthing center on Aquidneck Island for health and safety reasons. I spent over 40 years in the human services profession in Newport County and during that entire time I worked in partnership with the staff of the Newport Birthing Center. They came in contact with families during the first critical days after birth and were able to provide support, information and referral and follow-up to help families navigate the local services available including home visiting, behavioral health, basic human needs and newborn and family health care... to name a few.

There are exceptional services in Newport County for newborns and their families and the Birthing Center is the cornerstone of the system that helps to link families with services for positive long-term outcomes.

I strongly urge you to support the Newport Birthing Center.

Sincerely,

Susan Schenck  
341 Boulevard  
Middletown, RI