

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

State House  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903  
9 April 2026

**Re: Testimony in Support of S2380 – The Rhode Island Birthing Center Access, Transparency, and Financial Accountability Act of 2026**

Chair Murray and Members of the Committee,

I write in strong support of **S2380**, which would establish critical safeguards to protect access to birthing services across Rhode Island.

This bill addresses a clear and urgent gap in current law. As it stands today, there are insufficient requirements for advance notice, transparency, and financial accountability when a hospital or health system seeks to close or significantly reduce services at a birthing center. **S2380** corrects this by requiring a structured, evidence-based review process before such decisions can take effect. Under this legislation, any proposed closure or significant reduction in services would require at least 180 days' notice, formal application to the Department of Health, comprehensive financial disclosures, and a public hearing process.

This includes detailed reporting on patient impact, workforce implications, and maternal and newborn health outcomes, ensuring that decisions are evaluated not just financially, but in terms of real-world consequences for Rhode Island families.

Importantly, the bill also requires healthcare systems to demonstrate that closure is truly unavoidable, that no reasonable alternatives exist, and that such actions will not worsen disparities in maternal or newborn health outcomes.

These are not burdensome requirements, they are reasonable expectations when essential healthcare services are at stake.

I also want to address several arguments that have been raised in opposition to this legislation. Some suggest that **S2380** represents an overreach into hospital operations. However, this bill does not prohibit closures. It simply requires that such decisions be justified through a transparent, data-driven process with public accountability. When access to maternal care is on the line, that level of oversight is not excessive, it is appropriate.

Others argue that financial pressures alone should be sufficient justification for reducing services. But **S2380** recognizes that financial claims must be evaluated in full context, including system-wide resources, investment decisions, and potential alternatives. Without this level of scrutiny, the public is left to accept assertions that may not reflect the full financial picture.

There is also concern that the application and review process may create delays. However, the bill establishes clear timelines for review and decision-making, ensuring that the process is both thorough and efficient.

Ultimately, **S2380** is about restoring balance.

It ensures that decisions about birthing services, services that directly impact maternal and infant health, are not made unilaterally or without public visibility. It recognizes that healthcare systems play a vital role, but that role must be exercised with transparency and accountability to the communities they serve.

At a time when healthcare systems are increasingly consolidated and decision-making is more opaque than ever before, this legislation provides necessary guardrails to protect patients, families, and frontline providers.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass **S2380** and help ensure that access to safe, equitable, and timely maternal care remains protected across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matt Grant  
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Senate District 12