

—Slug:.....COMM-0872.opin.openle.legislators
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—For section.....Voices/Open Letter
—Format.....Opinions
—Dateline.....
—Article Number:.....43858

Notes from editor (not for publication):

Hi, Mike. I've tweaked the order just a bit. Some sentences didn't logically follow each other. Please let me know if you think I've overstepped, and please keep us posted if news on this breaks. I'll likely be working on a story on Monday for Tuesday's paper. —Jeff

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Lawmakers support BMH Birthing Center

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 Having a birthing center is vital to continued efforts to
3 attract younger people to live here and support them when they
4 do

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 WINDHAM COUNTY legislators support efforts to maintain
7 the Birthing Center at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH) and
8 are ready to work with its staff and leadership, the Governor's
9 Office, the Legislature, the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB),

and the entire region to find a sustainable path forward to support birthing and OB-GYN services in southern Vermont.

Your legislative delegation supports the hospital leadership's efforts to sustain the whole hospital. Its leadership and staff deserve credit for cutting a structural deficit in half, conducting ongoing rigorous internal process audits, and engaging the workforce and community while on their way to producing a balanced budget.

BMH staff have provided exceptional service for generations, and staff and management, who have been working under difficult conditions, need the region's support.

We understand the budget that BMH is about to submit to the GMCB will receive rigorous review. And it will receive extra scrutiny because of recent budget challenges and the need to reduce structural budget deficits. We encourage the board to suggest actionable options for both short-term and long-term sustainability.

The costs of running a birthing center are significant, but the value to the region is much greater and vital to women and families.

A [new law](#) lays out a process and timeline for a hospital to close an essential department to reduce or avoid substantial disruption to a community. We hope this law will provide time for all of us in the region to rally around our hospital and show we understand the cost and also the inestimable value the birthing center brings to us all.

* * *

AS VERMONT, the region, and the town of Brattleboro continue efforts to support younger people and families and to encourage more to move here, having a birthing center is vital to those efforts.

Your Windham County legislators look forward to helping sustain the Birthing Center and Brattleboro Memorial Hospital as a foundational institution in our region.

44 We value the hospital and the people who work there, as
45 well as the people who rely on their services. We commit to
46 joining community efforts so the hospital and birthing center can
47 continue to serve our region.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

48 This letter is signed by members of the Windham County
49 legislative delegation: Sens. Wendy Harrison and Nader Hashim
50 and Reps. Mollie Burke, Ian Goodnow, Emilie Kornheiser, Zon
51 Eastes, Emily Long, Mike Mrowicki, Chris Morrow, Leslie
52 Goldman, Michelle Bos-Lun, Laura Sibilia, and Emily Carris
53 Duncan.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

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####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

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