From: Maddie Severns
To: Council Clerk; City Council Email
Subject: Letter for 6/22/2026 meeting
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Good evening, and thank you for allowing me to speak.

My name is Maddie, and I am a labor and delivery nurse on Grady Family Birthplace.

A few days ago, my coworkers and I were told that our labor and delivery unit is closing.

Like many healthcare workers, I have spent my career putting others first. I've missed holidays, birthdays, school events, and countless nights of sleep because I believed in the importance of caring for mothers and babies in our community. I never imagined I would have to stand here and fight for the place where I have had the honor of helping bring new life into the world.

For many people, a labor and delivery unit is simply another department in a hospital. For me, it is where I have witnessed some of the most beautiful and meaningful moments imaginable. I have watched parents hear their baby's first cry. I have held the hands of frightened mothers. I have celebrated miracles and comforted families through unimaginable loss. These are moments that stay with you forever.

What makes this closure especially painful is that it affects so much more than the staff who work there.

It affects the first-time mother who suddenly has to travel farther while in labor.

It affects the woman experiencing a pregnancy emergency who cannot afford extra minutes on the road.

It affects families who already struggle with transportation, childcare, or access to healthcare.

And it affects every future parent in this community who deserves to deliver their baby close to home, surrounded by the people and resources they trust.

Healthcare is often discussed in numbers, budgets, and spreadsheets. But the reality is that every number represents a person. Every statistic represents a family. Every bed that disappears represents a mother who may have fewer options and greater risks when she needs care the most.

I am proud of the team I work with. These nurses, physicians, technicians, and support staff have dedicated their lives to serving this community. We have answered the call at all hours of the day and night. We have stood beside families during their happiest moments and their hardest ones. We have saved lives together.

The day we learned of this closure, what broke my heart most was not thinking about my

own job. It was thinking about the families who will lose access to care and the mothers who may have to travel farther during one of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

A community's strength can often be measured by how it cares for its mothers and babies. When a labor and delivery unit closes, we are not just losing a service. We are losing a vital piece of our community's foundation.

Tonight, I ask you to remember the families behind this decision. I ask you to advocate for the mothers who may one day need emergency care. I ask you to consider the babies who have not yet been born and the parents who will soon be counting on this community to support them.

Madeline Laseke
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Sent from my iPhone