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For Immediate Release

State Representative Amy “Murri” Briel

For More Information:
contact@staterepbriel.com

Briel Introduces First Bill, Bridging Gaps in Rural Healthcare

OTTAWA, Ill. – Working toward solutions to address challenges facing rural healthcare in Illinois, newly inaugurated state Rep. Amy “Murri” Briel, D-Ottawa, has introduced her first bill to examine options for expanding access to care in underserved communities.

“Rural hospitals are closing at alarming rates, leaving handfuls of its patients and their families scrambling to find out-of-town options. These closures leave people traveling for hours for the most basic care, or worse, without care at all,” said Briel. “My bill aims to investigate why these closures are happening in the first place and allow us to identify solutions to expand and maintain care in rural communities.”

Rural hospitals in Illinois have faced multiple challenges, including financial pressures and staff shortages. To ensure residents in these areas have better access to care, Briel introduced House Bill 1301, which creates The Rural Hospital Task Force within the Illinois Department of Public Health to:

- Investigate the current state of rural hospitals in Illinois
- Provide actionable recommendations to prevent further closures
- Explore ways to expand and improve healthcare services for rural residents.

The task force will deliver its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by January 2027 to ensure accountability and progress measures are in place.

“As a first-time legislator but a full-time resident of my community, I know that our rural families are ready for lawmakers to fight harder for them,” said Briel. “I’m humbled to be in a position where I can amplify these voices. This bill will be impactful for entire communities, ensuring no one is left behind when seeking the most basic healthcare. This is a solid first step toward ensuring rural families have the healthcare that’s accessible to anyone else in the state.”

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