



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

## Senator Brouk Announces 2023 Year in Review Summary

SAMRA G. BROUK December 29, 2023



**ROCHESTER, NY** - Senator Samra Brouk (SD-55) announced today a summary of her record of historic accomplishments on behalf of the constituents in the 55th Senate District.

“I am incredibly proud of all that my office has accomplished in support of those living in Senate District 55,” **said Senator Samra G. Brouk.** “We’ve secured record investments in our community, fought for a state budget that fairly funds our schools and mental health systems, and passed transformational legislation that will make New York a safer place to give birth. I look forward to continuing this work into 2024 and beyond.”

Senator Brouk serves as the Chair of the Senate Mental Health Committee and sits on the Health, Children & Families, Veterans & Military Affairs, Internet & Technology, Consumer Protections, and Cities 2 Committees. Additionally, Brouk serves as a member of the Legislative Women's Caucus and the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian (BPHA) Caucus. In 2023, Brouk was appointed a Chair for the BPHA Caucus' People's Budget.

The 55th Senate District includes the eastern portion of the City of Rochester, Irondequoit, Webster, Penfield, Perinton, Pittsford, and East Rochester.

### **Expanding Mental Health Services**

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Mental Health, Senator Brouk has remained focused on improving New York's mental health infrastructure so that all people can voluntarily access compassionate care in their time of need.

- Fought to establish the **Daniel's Law Task Force**, which will study crisis responses across New York State.
- Wrote a bill to establish a **Maternal Mental Health Workgroup**, which will seek to better understand the state of maternal mental health in New York, and issue policy recommendations to more equitably serve birthing parents. This legislation was included in the FY'24 State Budget.
- Created a **Youth Mental Health Advisory Board** to elevate youth voices as part of the solution to the worsening youth mental health crisis.
- Advocated for long-overdue **cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for New York's mental health workforce**. Brouk has successfully secured annual wage increases for these workers, with an additional 4.0% increase in 2023.

“We are witnessing the effects of decades of divestment from our mental health systems,” **said Senator Samra Brouk.** “I’m proud of the work we have done so far to ensure that we strengthen our mental health workforce, give our young people the support they deserve, and transform our crisis response systems so that all people can be treated with dignity.”

### **Improving Maternal Health Outcomes**

The United States is one of the most dangerous places for a person to give birth, and in New York, Black women are five times more likely to die from a pregnancy related complication than their white counterparts. Senator Brouk knows that supporting families and birthing parents at such a critical time is an essential component to setting them up for a lifetime of success.

- Led advocacy efforts to **implement a statewide Medicaid benefit for doula care**, which is set to take effect in January.
- Wrote and passed legislation to create a **Community Doula Directory**, which was signed into law earlier this year, to make doula care information and resources more accessible to those who need it.
- Hosted her **Second Annual Community Baby Shower** to connect Rochester families with resources, supplies, and information to support them as they start or grow their families.
- Organized a **legislative hearing on doula care** to ensure that the legislature understood the value of a doula and to put forward policy solutions to combat the worsening maternal mortality crisis.

“Through our work, we are positioning New York as a leader in combating the worsening maternal mortality crisis,” **said Senator Samra Brouk**. “As a Black mother in a state where my race makes me five times more likely to die, I viscerally understand the need for change. I’m proud of our work so far, and look forward to continuing our efforts to make New York a safer place to start a family.”

## **Funding Parity**

For too long, the Greater Rochester Area and Upstate New York have not had a united voice in Albany to represent their needs. Senator Brouk is a strong voice for our region, and continues to secure long overdue investments for our region.

- Released a report outlining the **connection between historic underfunding of the City of Rochester and increased rates of violence**.
- Secured more than **\$8.7 million in funding for roads and bridges** in Monroe County through New York’s **CHIPS** and **PAVE** programs in the 2022-23 budget.
- Participated in a hearing to better understand and address the causes and effects of poverty in Upstate New York.
- Provided 35 local organizations with grant support, **totaling \$2.7 million**. Grant recipients include:
  - \$500,000 to Connected Communities to support their Greenwood Project
  - \$50,000 to Rise Up Rochester for violence intervention programming
  - \$400,000 to Person Centered Housing Options to build single family housing
  - \$82,000 to South East Area Coalition for their mobile tool rental operation

- \$37,000 to Teen Empowerment for their Youth Organizers Program
- \$50,000 to Center for Employment Opportunities for their job development programming
- \$220,000 to Webster EMS / NEQALS for new ambulances
- Delivered **\$1.12 billion in total aid for our local school districts**—an 11.9 percent increase over last year. This is an increase of approximately \$1,850 per pupil.

“I’m proud to be a voice in advocating for what our community deserves,” **said Senator Samra Brouk**. “Over the last three years, we’ve made incredible progress in making sure that our region receives the resources it deserves. We still have work to do, and I look forward to fighting for our community again in 2024.”

### **Servant Leadership**

Senator Brouk is a proud member of this community, and is a resource for families and individuals in our community. Her office assists with matters pertaining to state agencies, and can help connect constituents to different resources in our region. She prioritizes finding new ways to connect with our community, and will continue this work in 2024:

- Connected more than 1,600 constituents to state and local resources.
- Helped more than 500 residents with unemployment issues with the Department of Labor, Department of Motor Vehicles, and other state agencies
- Attended more than 1,000 meetings with local and statewide advocates, organizations, and individuals to learn more about the challenges that exist for New Yorkers

- Connected with members of our community at more than 450 events across Senate District 55

“I’m proud to be a resource for those who call our community home,” **said Senator Samra Brouk.** “I encourage anyone in need of assistance with a state agency to contact my office so we can help.”