



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

## Senator Samra Brouk Passes Two Senate Bills to Study Mental Health Disparities and Increase Access to Medical Records

SAMRA G. BROUK February 24, 2021

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH, SUICIDE, HEALTH DISPARITIES**



**Albany, NY** - Yesterday, the New York State Senate passed two bills sponsored by Senator Samra Brouk, each aimed at supporting the mental health and healthcare needs of vulnerable New Yorkers. These bills will foster dialogue around the causes of mental illness and mental health crises among families and communities across the state.

**Senate Bill S3408** will create a Black suicide prevention task force to examine, evaluate and determine how to improve mental health and suicide prevention for New York's Black residents aged 5 through 18. According to a fifteen-year study done by Jeffrey A. Bridge (Ohio State University), and a published article in the Journal of American Medical Association concerning Age Related Disparity in Suicide Rates Among US Youths from 2001 to 2015, suicide rates of Black children aged 5 to 18 have nearly doubled. The Bridge study found that among children, ages 5 to 11, and young adolescents ages 12 to 14, those who took their own lives were more likely to be male, black and dealing with stressful relationships at home or with friends. Analyses revealed that the suicide rate among those younger than 13 years is approximately two times higher for Black children compared to white children.

**Senate Bill S3409** will authorize the release of certain records of deceased residents of mental health facilities to family members upon written request. Family members may learn of the existence of their relative only after the relative's death, and may have no ability to ascertain whether their relative even existed. This bill will allow for release unless the individual or a qualified family member had objected during his or her lifetime and such objection was documented in the individual's services plan.

“Today’s passage of Senate bills S3408 and S3409 marks an important step in creating more transparency, dialogue, and understanding of the mental health of New Yorkers, in particular, our most vulnerable residents,” **stated Senator Brouk**. “By creating a commission to understand the causes of suicide among Black youth, we can work to develop solutions that would support these children before they get to the point of taking their own lives. And when New Yorkers die in mental health facilities, their family members deserve to know about their lives and their death. I am proud to open these important channels to residents of our state and further the goal of improving the mental health and mental healthcare of our communities.”

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*New York State Senator Samra Brouk (pronounced Sah-mra Br-uuk) represents the incredibly diverse 55th Senate District, stretching from the southern shores of Lake Ontario, through Rochester's Neighborhood of the Arts, and south to Finger Lakes wine country. It includes the towns of Victor, East Bloomfield, West Bloomfield, Richmond, Bristol, South Bristol, Canadice, and Naples in Ontario County and the towns of Rush, Mendon, Pittsford, Perinton, Penfield, East Rochester, and Irondequoit, plus the east side of the City of Rochester in Monroe County. Senator Brouk serves as the Chair of the Mental Health Committee and sits on Health, Education, Elections, Women's Issues, Aging, and Alcoholism and Substance Abuse committees.*

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2021-S3408**

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

- 

Establishes a Black youth suicide prevention task force

January 29, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Samra G. Brouk**

Do you support this bill?

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## 2021-S3409

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor

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Relates to the release of patient records by the office of mental health

January 29, 2021

In Assembly Committee

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Do you support this bill?