



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

## Senator Brouk Announces 2021 Year in Review Summary

SAMRA G. BROUK December 27, 2021

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**2021 Year in Review**

Investments in schools, mental health services, public infrastructure and Rochester area priorities top the funding list

More than 1,000 constituents received assistance accessing gov't services

**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 the budget resources and responsive legislation I have been able to deliver to my hometown community,” **said Senator Samra G. Brouk.** “As a freshman Senator and facing the challenge of navigating pandemic disruptions, I did not lose sight of my goals in Albany—to be a forceful advocate for my constituents in Western New York.”

Senator Brouk serves as the Chair of the Senate Mental Health Committee and sits on the Senate Health, Education, Elections, Women's Issues, Aging, and Alcoholism and Substance Abuse committees. She co-chairs the Joint Senate Task Force on Opioids, Addiction & Overdose Prevention. The 55th Senate District stretches from Lake Ontario through the east side of the City of Rochester, and south to Finger Lakes wine country. SD-55 includes the east side of the City of Rochester and the towns of Rush, Mendon, Pittsford, Perinton, Penfield, East Rochester, and Irondequoit in Monroe County and Victor, East Bloomfield, West Bloomfield, Richmond, Bristol, South Bristol, Canadice, and Naples in Ontario County.

### **School Funding**

- \$1.4B statewide increase in school Foundation Aid—the largest increase ever. This means schools in the 55th Senate District got an additional \$64 million dollars.
- All school districts in SD-55 will receive their full Foundation Aid by the 2023-24 school year.
- Every SD-55 school district is guaranteed a minimum 2 percent increase in Foundation Aid and every school district is allocated at least 60 percent of their full Foundation Aid funding for the 2021-22 school year.
- New York State is investing \$105 million to expand universal full-day prekindergarten
- Brouk also co-sponsored the third phase of the Rochester School Modernization Bill (S1761-C), adding \$475 million to RCSD building improvement projects.

“As the proud daughter of a public school teacher and public school graduate, I went to Albany ready to fight for more funding for our public schools in the Rochester area, and I am grateful to announce that we won this fight. Schools in the 55th Senate District are now getting the Foundation Aid that was promised to them for over a decade,” **said Senator Samra**

**G. Brouk.** “I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with parents, families and public school advocates to continue the fight in future years to bring even more resources to our students.”

## **Mental Health Services**

*Senator Brouk serves as the Chair of the Mental Health Committee*

- The governor recently signed legislation sponsored by Senator Brouk requiring that New York State create a 9-8-8 emergency line. This legislation goes further than the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 passed by Congress, ensuring that there are appropriate training and reporting measures in place. The bill also provides for public service announcements and messaging to target hard-to-reach and historically underserved populations (S6194B).
- The governor signed Brouk legislation addressing workforce shortages in mental health through an extension of a waiver of professional licensure requirements for persons employed as mental health practitioners, psychologists and social workers in a program or service operated, regulated, funded, or approved by the department of mental hygiene (S6431).
- The governor signed Brouk legislation ensuring children’s camps are prepared to serve both children and young staffers struggling with their mental health by allowing these camps to have psychologists and other professionals on staff (S4345-A).
- Senator Brouk introduced “Daniel’s Law,” named for Daniel Prude, requiring that trained mental health and substance use counselors respond to mental health and substance use crises, with response overseen by statewide and regional councils (S4814).
- Enacted a state budget that includes a 1% cost of living (COLA) increase for mental health and substance abuse workers statewide – the first COLA increase in twelve years for this workforce.

“The pandemic has challenged the mental health of residents in my district in ways we could not have predicted—children, adults, and seniors are all suffering from the isolation and loss of loved ones,” **said Senator Samra G. Brouk.** “Now is the time to invest in our behavioral health care system, to increase wages for the people who provide human services support, and to expand opportunities to bring more people into the behavioral health treatment profession.”

### **Constituent Services**

- The Office of Senator Brouk assisted more than 1,000 constituents with administrative and emergency issues, serving as a liaison between people and state, federal and local agencies such as the Department of Labor, Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Corrections, and the Department of Taxation and Finance.

“I am incredibly proud of the work my office is doing to help people in our community in moments of crisis,” **said Senator Samra G. Brouk.** “This pandemic has taken its toll on my constituent’s mental health and increased the need for help in applying for unemployment insurance benefits and rental assistance. Helping people in their time of need has been one of my proudest accomplishments during this first year in public service. Our office continues to serve as a community resource for residents from Naples to Irondequoit.”

### **Public Infrastructure**

- Secured \$350 million in statewide transportation infrastructure investments
  - \$100 million increase for Consolidated Local and State Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS)
    - \$15,771,780.55 for the municipalities within SD-55; a 21% increase locally.
  - \$100 million in new funding for Extreme Winter Recovery (EWR) funding– a \$35 million increase from last year
    - \$2,773,312.34 for municipalities within SD-55; a 54% increase locally.
  - \$100 million increase for the City Touring Routes Program; new to the 2021/2022 Budget
    - \$5,416,049.97 dedicated to the City of Rochester
  - \$50 million increase for PAVE-NY
    - \$4,450,544.62 for municipalities within SD-55; a 50% increase locally.
- The City of Rochester is receiving nearly \$12 million in state funding for local road repairs and maintenance as part of the state’s 2021-2022 budget, marking a 137% increase in infrastructure funding for the city compared to last year’s budget allotment.

### **Other Local Priorities**

- Worked alongside community advocates to block plans by New York Power Authority(NYPA)/Canal Corporation to clear cut trees along the Erie Canal.

- Worked alongside community advocates to address continuing odor complaints at High Acres Landfill in Perinton.
- \$500,000 in funding for Rochester's Police Accountability Board, marking the first time a state government has invested in local police accountability.
- Governor signed Brouk legislation that will issue a property tax break to local volunteer firefighters and emergency medical response personnel (S6676A)
- Governor signed Brouk legislation that will ban the use of pesticides at children's overnight or summer day camps (S4478A)
- Governor signed Brouk legislation that will expand the definition of coercion to include the production or dissemination of nude images (S2986A)
- Governor signed Brouk legislation related to education about fertility issues such as Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (S6957)
- Brouk responded to community concerns and introduced legislation to prevent individuals convicted of a crime involving elder abuse from inheriting the elder's estate (S7502)
- Brouk responded to community concerns and introduced legislation to provide tuition assistance to certain Afghan and Iraqi immigrants (S7583)
- Brouk responded to community concerns and introduced legislation to make certain fertility fraud a crime (S7588)
- Enacted state budget secured \$440 million in property tax relief for 1.3 million New Yorkers earning below \$250,000

## **Awards**

Senator Brouk's accomplishments and leadership have earned her recognition as one of the top Black leaders in New York State by City & State, as well as a leader in the Mental Health

and Healthcare industries. She has also been lauded by the mental health and environmental communities, and has received acknowledgements from the Mental Health Association of New York State, National Association of School Psychologists, the New York Association Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services and the New York League of Conservation Voters.