



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

## Senator Brouk Hosts Maternal Health Panel Discussion, Announces Maternal Health Legislation Signed

SAMRA G. BROUK August 11, 2022



**ROCHESTER, NY** - Senator Samra Brouk joined local experts and representatives from community-based organizations to announce that maternal health legislation she authored was signed into law. The Senator then hosted a Parents Resource Fair and Maternal Health Panel Discussion at the Gantt R-Center to connect families with community resources and discuss maternal health challenges and potential policy solutions.

“Black women face harmful and often deadly disparities in maternal health care that make pregnancy a frightening proposition, and as a new mom myself I am committed to improving maternal health care outcomes for our families,” **said Senator Samra Brouk.** “In the Senate, I have sponsored several packages of maternal health legislation—and one of my bills to improve maternal mental health screenings was recently signed into law. I also hosted this free event to connect our families directly with experts and potentially lifesaving resources. Nothing matters more than the health and safety of our Rochester area families.”

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black women in the United States are nearly three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than white women. **In Monroe County, the rate is 46 percent higher than the national average.**

Black women are also twice as likely to experience maternal mental health conditions, yet are only half as likely to seek help.

The Maternal Health Panel Discussion featured Sherita Bullock, Executive Director of the Healthy Baby Network; Dr. Stephanie Godleski, Associate Professor at the Department of Psychology at Rochester Institute of Technology; and Phyllis Sharp, an experienced Birth Doula at Royalty Birth Services, LLC. Free resources and information were also available for families through community organizations tabling at the event.

**Phyllis Sharp CLC, CD(DONA), Royalty Birth Services:** “It’s such an honor to be a part of this panel to share and discuss the role and importance of a doula and how it improves the care of birthing persons of color.”

**Dr. Stephanie Godleski, Rochester Institute of Technology:** “It is an honor to participate in this panel with amazing people like Sherita Bullock and Phyllis Sharp, on such an important topic like maternal health - especially for our local area.”

Senator Brouk sponsors a comprehensive maternal health care policy agenda to improve health outcomes for New York's mothers and gestational parents. Her package of maternal mental health legislation includes a study to improve current screening tools, a workgroup to assess care and make informed policy recommendations, and a bill to offer an additional opportunity to screen for maternal mental health conditions. The Senator also sponsors legislation focused on democratizing doula care, setting standards for Medicaid reimbursement and creating a directory of available doulas. And the Senator sponsors legislation to ensure gestational parents are given information about procedures they may experience during childbirth, including cesarean sections and episiotomies.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2021-S7753**

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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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Requires the office of mental health and the department of health to conduct a study on the disparate impacts regarding postpartum depression screening tests

January 10, 2022

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Samra G. Brouk**

Do you support this bill?