



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

Senator Brouk Announces 2022 Year in Review Summary

SAMRA G. BROUK December 28, 2022

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH, MATERNAL HEALTH, ABORTION, COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT**

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.

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“As my first term comes to an end, 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. “In addition to responding to attacks on our bodily autonomy by a radical supreme court, I have remained focused on strengthening our mental health system and fighting for long-overdue investments in our communities.”

Senator Brouk is concluding her first term, and currently serves as the Chair of the Senate Mental Health Committee and sits on the Senate Health, Education, Elections, Aging, and Alcoholism and Substance Abuse committees. Additionally, Brouk co-chairs the Joint Senate Task Force on Opioids, Addiction & Overdose Prevention.

The 55th Senate District currently stretches from Lake Ontario through the east side of the City of Rochester and eastern Monroe County suburbs, and south through the Finger Lakes. When Brouk begins her second term in January, the district will no longer include Ontario County and the Monroe County towns of Rush and Mendon, and will instead include the

Town of Webster and a larger portion of the City of Rochester, in addition to the towns of Irondequoit, 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 **create New York's 9-8-8 line** for mental health and substance use emergencies ([S7850](#)). The line, which can be called or texted, became active earlier this year as a result of Brouk's advocacy for funding in the 2022-23 budget.
- Introduced legislation to provide all young people in New York with **five free telehealth visits for mental health care** to help mitigate wait times for local providers ([S8277](#)).
- Wrote the **Student Lifeline Act** to ensure that every high school and college ID card includes information on how to use New York's new 9-8-8 line ([S8410A](#)).
- Advocated for long-overdue **cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for New York's mental health workforce**, securing the first pay raise in over ten years in 2021 and a 5.4% increase in 2022.
- Reduced the mental health worker shortage in New York by **updating credentialing requirements** for professionals who issue diagnoses, which will ultimately bring thousands of providers online ([S9449](#)).

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“When I took office in 2021, New York’s mental health systems were struggling as a result of decades of divestment,” said Senator Samra Brouk. “And while our work to correct these wrongs is far from over, I’m proud of what we have done thus far to make this essential care more accessible for all New Yorkers.”

Improving Maternal Health Outcomes

Senator Brouk has a deep understanding of the maternal health crisis. With the knowledge that Black women are roughly four times as likely to die as a result of a maternal health complication, Brouk has been focused on making sure that all new parents, regardless of race or zip code, can access culturally-competent, lifesaving care.

- Passed legislation to **study postpartum depression screening tools** to ensure that providers are asking questions to diverse populations using a culturally-competent methodology ([S7753](#)), which was signed into law earlier this year.
- Introduced legislation to **expand access to doula care** in New York via community directories and Medicaid reimbursement ([S8968](#), [S8967](#)).
- Passed legislation to **require hospitals and birthing centers to publish data on maternity related procedures** and practices and to make this information available to patients ([S8751](#)).
- Introduced legislation to **create the cesarean births review board** to make recommendations for lowering c-section rates in New York ([S8866](#))
- Wrote legislation to require the Department of Health to **provide maternity patients with information on episiotomies** ([S8455](#))

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“Maternal mortality and morbidity rates are trending in the wrong direction, and the outcomes are far worse for Black and brown families,” said Senator Samra Brouk. “When I became a mother earlier this year, I saw first hand the opportunities that exist to improve our systems and to improve health outcomes for parents and babies across New York. I’m proud to be advocating for meaningful changes, like expanding access to doula care and addressing maternal mental health, that will undoubtedly strengthen our families and communities and

ultimately save lives.”

Protecting Bodily Autonomy

Following extreme Supreme Court decisions that roll back reproductive rights and jeopardize health care providers, Senator Brouk worked to protect New Yorkers.

- Passed the **Equal Rights Amendment (S51002)**, which adds fundamental legal protections against discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, and pregnancy outcomes.
- Fought to include the **Reproductive Equity Act (S7002)** in the 2022-23 State Budget, which was written by Senator Brouk, which requires insurance providers who provide maternity coverage to also cover abortion care.
- Passed a legislative package to **protect the reproductive rights and bodily autonomy of New Yorkers:**
 - Protects the legal rights of women traveling from out-of-state to seek abortions in New York (Chap. 218 of 2022)
 - Prohibits New York State from cooperating with anti-abortion states on cases involving abortions performed legally our state (Chap. 219 of 2022)
 - Protects health care providers from medical misconduct and malpractice charges for providing lawful abortions to residents from anti-abortion states (Chap. 220 & Chap. 221 of 2022)

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“Earlier this year, a radical Supreme Court attacked reproductive rights and bodily autonomy,” said Senator Samra Brouk. “I’m proud of our work to keep New York a safe place for women, communities of color, and those in the LGBTQ+ community. I will always fight for the rights of New Yorkers to love who they love, decide when to have a family, and express themselves how they choose.”

Funding Parity

The Greater Rochester area has historically been overlooked with respect to receiving equitable funding compared to other New York metropolitan areas. Senator Brouk has been a vocal champion to ensure our communities receive the funding they deserve. This remains a primary focus as she heads into her second term.

- Secured more than **\$8 million in funding for roads and bridges in Monroe County** through New York’s **CHIPS** and **PAVE** programs in the 2022-23 budget.
- Provided more than **\$42 million in total for grant funding to local municipalities and organizations** during her first term, including:
 - \$255,000 to Bushnell’s Basin Fire Association for firehouse improvements
 - \$396,000 to Town of Pittsford for sidewalks and repaving
 - \$350,000 to Town of Perinton for AV project and Whitney Road sidewalk project
 - \$500,000 to Lifespan for senior support services
 - \$150,000 to Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester for programming and support
 - \$185,000 to the Dwyer Program to provide peer support to Monroe County veterans and their families

- \$483,175 to Legal Aid Society of Rochester to ensure that all families can receive legal assistance if needed

- **Delivered \$1.24 billion in total aid for our local school districts**—an 8.6 percent increase over last year. This includes nearly \$821 million in Foundation Aid to support our students.

- Invested in organizations working to **prevent violence and support young people** in our region, such as:
 - SNUG
 - Teen Empowerment
 - Rise Up Rochester
 - Gandhi Institute
 - Community Place
 - Parent Leadership Training Institute
 - Rochester Black Bar Association
 - BIPOC PEEEEEEK
 - Connected Communities
 - Avenue Blackbox Theatre
 - Willow Domestic Violence Center
 - Rochester Public Library
 - Hub585
 - Ibero-American Action League

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*“For too long, the Greater Rochester Area has not had a seat at the table when funding decisions are made,” said **Senator Samra Brouk**. “I’m proud to have delivered meaningful investments for our neighbors during my first term, and I look forward to continuing this work in 2023 and beyond.”*

Servant Leadership

Senator Brouk knows that a legislator’s work must be based in service to their community. From offering assistance to residents in need of resources from New York State, to advocating on issues that matter to her constituents, **Senator Brouk has continued to use her voice to deliver for Senate District 55:**

- Connected more than **1,500 constituents** to state and local resources.
- Helped more than 100 residents with **unemployment issues** with the Department of Labor
- Continued efforts to protect the natural beauty along the **Erie Canal**
- Stood with residents at the **Pines of Perinton** to ensure that residents are treated fairly and with dignity
- Provided hundreds of local families with resources and supplies at her first annual **Community Baby Shower**
- **Advocated against RG&E rate increases** in a time when families are already struggling with inflation

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"I'm proud to be an advocate for our neighbors when they need it most," said Senator Samra Brouk. "My office serves thousands of residents each year, and I look forward to continuing my commitment to meaningfully supporting those who call our region home."

SENATOR BROUK'S YEAR-END REPORT

\$8 MILLION INVESTED IN
LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**STOOD WITH
FAMILIES** AT
THE PINES OF
PERINTON

\$1.2B INVESTED IN
LOCAL SCHOOLS

\$42M
IN GRANTS SECURED
DURING FIRST TERM

15 BILLS CHAPTERED

1,500+
CONSTITUENT
CASES
RESOLVED

**FOUGHT TO
EXPAND** NEW
YORK'S MENTAL
HEALTH
WORKFORCE

**COMBATTED RATE
HIKES** FROM RG&E

PASSED THE
**EQUAL RIGHTS
AMENDMENT**