

# Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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## **Senator Helming Calls on Governor to Sign Bipartisan Bill Creating Rural Suicide Prevention Council**

In the final days of the 2024 legislative session, the State Senate and Assembly passed legislation creating a Rural Suicide Prevention Council (S3587A/A7188). The bill, sponsored by Senator Pam Helming and Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, was passed unanimously in both houses with bipartisan support.

The Rural Suicide Prevention Council would examine the barriers to mental health and substance abuse treatment and prevention services and issue actionable recommendations on legislation, policy and funding to help reduce rates of suicide and suicidal attempts among rural residents.

A [2023 report by NORC at the University of Chicago](#) found that the suicide rate in rural New York is double that of urban New York (15.2 vs. 7.5 per population of 100,000) and is increasing at a significantly greater rate (83.1% vs. 31.6% between 2004-2020). The suicide rate increased 17% in rural areas of the state between 2019 and 2020 alone.

Studies have pointed to several contributing factors in rural areas, such as economic trends, access to services, distance from healthcare providers, and availability of transportation.

Senator Helming said, “We know from data that rural areas of New York have higher rates of suicide than urban areas. We know from studies that there are unique barriers and challenges that rural counties face. Now, we need a focused effort, through the Rural Suicide Prevention Council, to turn these findings and recommendations into actionable policies and practical solutions we can implement to prevent these tragedies and help more people. We all have a role to play in preventing suicide.”

Senator Helming is urging Governor Hochul to sign this legislation into law. See her letter [here](#).

If you or a family member are in need of help, call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988.

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