



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

## Enacted State Budget Delivers for Senate District 55

SAMRA G. BROUK May 9, 2024

| ISSUE: **2024-2025 STATE BUDGET**



### Prioritizing Mental Health

As the Chair of the Senate Committee on Mental Health, I was proud to deliver a budget that continued to invest in mental health. For the fourth year in a row, we provided our mental health workforce with a cost of living adjustment as part of our ongoing efforts to correct years of divestment. This budget also invested \$200,000 into Sources of Strength, a local youth suicide prevention program, and secured more than \$8 million toward veteran's mental health and peer support. Finally, I'm excited to share that this budget invests \$1.5

million dollars toward trauma-informed mental health crisis response programming, to ensure that all people are met with the care and compassion they deserve during their moment of need.

### **Protecting Education Funding**

As the daughter of a public school teacher, I know the value that schools have on our families and communities. In this year's budget, I successfully advocated against proposed cuts to Foundation Aid funding. Additionally, I secured an additional \$16 million dollars in funds for schools in my district, for a total investment of more than \$1 billion dollars for schools in Irondequoit, Webster, Penfield, Perinton, Pittsford, East Rochester, and the City of Rochester.

We also expanded access to the Tuition Assistance Program by increasing the income threshold for families to receive support, and raised the minimum award amount from \$500 to \$1,000. This budget also secured an additional \$100 million dollars toward Universal Pre-K, and continues our investment in our state's historic school meals program.

### **Supporting Children & Families**

As a mother, I can say with confidence that this year's budget made great strides in supporting working families in New York State. The budget includes [my legislation](#) to provide continued health insurance coverage to children ages 0-6 who are enrolled in the state's Medicaid or Child Health Plus Programs. We also increased funding the New York State Child Care Block Grant, to ensure that we are investing appropriately in our childcare workforce.

This budget prioritizes the needs of new and growing families by funding [my legislation](#) to establish the Community Doula Expansion Program, which will support local doulas and

doula organizations with administrative expenses. Through this budget, New York State also became the first state in the nation to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to cover leave for prenatal appointments.

### **Supporting Workers**

This year's budget stands with the working people who keep our state moving forward. We increased benefits for workers in Tier 6 of the NYS Pension Program to ensure that our state's employees can retire in dignity. We also updated funding policy to require the use of project labor agreements (PLAs) for large scale construction projects under the SUNY construction fund. Finally, I'm proud to share that this year's budget invests \$200,000 in Rochester's Multi-Craft Apprentice Program to train young people for careers in the trades.

### **Investing in Upstate New York**

Since taking office in 2021, I am proud of what we have accomplished in advocacy of upstate communities like ours. In this year's budget, we secured an investment totaling \$30 million into the City of Rochester to correct historic underinvestment. This follows the report that my office released last year outlining the lack of funding Rochester receives when compared to similar Upstate cities, and how that absence of funds correlates to increased violence.

This budget also delivers the first increase in Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) funding to towns in our community in over a decade, as well as approximately \$30 million dollars for road and bridge maintenance in Senate District 55, which includes Winter Recovery and pothole repair.

### **Protecting our Environment**

Our futures depend on a clean and safe environment. In this year's budget, we invested \$500 million toward clean water infrastructure to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to safe

drinking water. We also secured \$300 million dollars toward improvements at parks across New York State, so that residents can enjoy and embrace the natural beauty in their communities. Finally, I'm proud to share that in this year's budget we protected funding for the Environment Protection Fund.

### **Supporting Seniors**

Our elders deserve to be treated with dignity, which is why I'm proud to share that this year's budget invests \$1.5 million in elder abuse prevention programming through Lifespan of Greater Rochester. We also secured \$1.4 million for the Holocaust Survivors' Initiative, to ensure that this aging population receives the unique support they need, particularly with regard to mental health. This budget also events \$2.5 million into the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, which helps senior navigate resources and programming while in long term care. Finally, as the result of our tireless advocacy, this year's budget increases the Medicaid reimbursement rate for hospitals, nursing homes, and long term care facilities—which will not only address hospital overcrowding but will ensure that our aging population can access the care they need to thrive.