



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

Senator Samra Brouk Secures Essential Funding in NYS Budget

SAMRA G. BROUK April 6, 2021

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Media contact:

Jenna McDavid, Communications Manager

(585) 210-3343

mcdavid@nysenate.gov

Albany, NY - Today, the New York State Senate passed the New York State Budget for FY2021-22. After several months of speaking to local residents and businesses, and negotiating with Senate and Assembly colleagues, Senator Samra Brouk, SD-55, secured essential funding for local schools, libraries, farms, small businesses, homeowners and renters, and mental health services and supports.

“Budgets are a statement of values, and I am proud of the advocacy that my staff and I have engaged in this year to ensure that the 55th District gets the funding that we need to recover from this pandemic,” **stated Senator Samra Brouk.** “This budget provides some important wins

for our region and essential investments in building a stronger New York State.”

EDUCATION

The Enacted New York State Budget has finally delivered on equitable school funding by fully funding Foundation Aid. It includes a \$1.4 billion Foundation Aid increase, the largest increase ever. The Budget also provides a three-year phase-in of Foundation Aid, ensuring that all districts will receive their 100% of Foundation Aid by the 2023-24 school year, finally fulfilling a promise made over ten years ago.

Finally, the Enacted Budget fully restores the Executive’s \$7.1 million cut to public library aid. An additional \$20 million is provided over Executive levels for library construction, for a total of \$34 million.

Senator Samra Brouk on education funding: “Getting much-needed funding for the students, teachers, and families of the 55th District has been a top priority for me since being elected to the Senate. As the daughter of a retired public school teacher and a public school graduate, I am thrilled to share the news that the enacted New York State budget will make a monumental investment in the students of the 55th Senate District. This year’s budget includes additional education aid to the Rochester City School District and a commitment to a three-year phase-in of Foundation Aid by the 2023-24 school year for every school in the 55th Senate District. I am proud to have championed these vital investments for our students, our families, and our community’s future.”

Sherry Johnson, Executive Director, Monroe County School Boards Association: “It has been an extraordinarily difficult year for our public school districts as they worked to provide instruction and supports for students and families while mitigating the risks of the COVID-19 pandemic. The costs associated with doing both have exceeded what districts had planned

for. While pandemic costs will be helped by the new federal ARP, this funding does not supplant operating, or other important aids school districts need to provide for the education of their students. We are so very appreciative and applaud the focused and determined efforts of Senator Brouk and our Senate delegation to make sure that foundation aid, expense based aids and other critical funding is supported in the NYS budget so that our districts can continue to provide the quality instruction, supports and resources that our students deserve.”

Dr. Lesli Myers-Small, Superintendent, Rochester City School District: “We are so fortunate to have a Rochester delegation that puts children first. This budget addresses the fiscal needs of Rochester’s scholars and is in their best interests. These meaningful investments will go a long way toward emphasizing the importance of a fair, sound, and equitable education.”

MENTAL HEALTH

The Enacted New York State Budget includes important support for the mental health of New Yorkers as well as the essential workers who provide mental healthcare across the state. This budget restored the 5% cuts that the Governor had proposed to the mental health budget, an important rejection of an austerity mindset and an investment into the holistic healing of our state’s residents.

The Enacted State Budget also includes a one percent cost of living (COLA) increase for mental health and substance abuse workers, the first COLA increase in twelve years for these individuals. At a time when New Yorkers are facing higher rates of substance abuse and mental health crises, these workers have put themselves on the line to ensure that our residents get the care and recovery that they need.

Senator Samra Brouk on mental health and substance abuse funding: “As Chair of the Senate Mental Health Committee, I am deeply committed to not only the holistic healing of all New Yorkers, but also of the support of the mental healthcare workers who will provide our state with the care needed for our recovery. Through months of advocacy efforts, I am proud to announce that the state budget includes the first cost of living wage increase in twelve years for mental health and substance abuse workers. The mental health impacts of COVID-19 will be felt for many years to come, and this budget reflects our state’s duty to invest in our recovery.”

Glenn Liebman, CEO, Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. (MHANYS): “It is so refreshing to see the mental health workforce recognized this way, especially this year after their tireless work helping New Yorkers cope with this pandemic. Our cost of living adjustment had been deferred for a dozen years, and we hope this year marks the point when New York again begins to invest in our heroic staff, who are always there when they are needed, and especially when they are needed most. We want to especially thank the Senate Mental Health Chair Samra Brouk, and the Assembly Mental Health Chair Aileen Gunther as well as the Legislative Leadership for their tireless efforts in delivering this important victory.”

Kirsten Vincent, PhD, LMHC, NYCPS, CPMC, CEO of Recovery Options of Western New York: “Recovery Options is extremely grateful to Senator Brouk for her tireless leadership in securing the restoration of the critically needed 1% COLA. These funds will help us to retain dedicated staff and firm up our efforts to provide recovery and trauma related services to Western New York communities at a time when they’ve never been more needed.”

Harvey Rosenthal, CEO of the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services: “The restoration of the 1% COLA sends a critically needed message of support and appreciation for the devoted efforts of community mental health workers and agencies that have been

stretched to the breaking point in addressing ever rising rates of distress, disability and trauma across our state. Senator Brouk's leadership and determination in moving the COLA forward make clear that she is a champion for New Yorkers with mental health needs, their families and our workforce."

Mary Russo, President & CEO of the Mental Health Association of Rochester/Monroe Inc: "On behalf of the Mental Health Community in Rochester, NY, we would like to thank Senator Samra Brouk for her support in a Cost of Living Adjustment for the mental health workforce. This funding will support the dedicated workforce who worked tirelessly to counsel others during the global pandemic that they are not alone, there are community programs that foster the recovery of countless individuals with mental health related issues."

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New York State Senator Samra Brouk (pronounced Sah-mra Br-uuk) represents the incredibly diverse 55th Senate District, stretching from the southern shores of Lake Ontario, through Rochester's Neighborhood of the Arts, and south to Finger Lakes wine country. It includes Victor, East Bloomfield, West Bloomfield, Richmond, Bristol, South Bristol, Canadice, and Naples in Ontario County and Rush, Mendon, Pittsford, Perinton, Penfield, East Rochester, and Irondequoit, plus the east side of the City of Rochester in Monroe County. Senator Brouk serves as the Chair of the Mental Health Committee and sits on Health, Education, Elections, Women's Issues, Aging, and Alcoholism and Substance Abuse committees.