

Annual Report 2023



# New York State Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health

**Senator Samra G. Brouk**

Chair



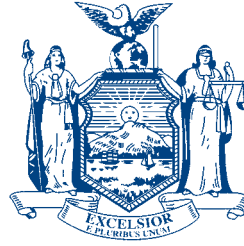
**Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins**  
President Pro Tempore  
NYS Senate Majority Leader



**CHAIR**  
MENTAL HEALTH

**COMMITTEES**  
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CITIES 2  
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**THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK**



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December 16, 2023

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Temporary President and Majority Leader  
New York State Senate  
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Stewart-Cousins:

I am pleased to transmit the Annual Report of the Senate's Standing Committee on Mental Health for the 2023 Legislative Session. As Chair, I am proud to continue to lead our efforts to address important matters under my committee's jurisdiction.

The continued challenges facing the Mental Health continuum in New York State were the top priority of the Mental Health Committee. As Chair, I conducted meetings with a statewide array of organizations, advocates, and individuals to listen to what is most needed in our communities. Workforce concerns stayed a critical role of our Committee's budget advocacy, helping the Senate negotiate another historic cost of living adjustment for our human service workers. The crisis seen among the mental health in our youth was again and is a major concern of the Committee, influencing the bills we reported out, and will continue to shape our conversations in the new year. Finally, I called a joint hearing with the Senate Standing Committee on Health to continue working on improving the racially disparate maternal health outcomes in our community and State by identifying the best practices to make sure that it is easier to access the emotional, physical and informational support provided by birth doulas.

During the 2023 Session, this Committee met **three** times in session and reported **14** bills. The Committee also held a joint-public hearing **to receive testimony on how to identify and examine best practices for integrating doulas into New York's maternal healthcare system** this past year.

I thank my colleagues who served on the Committee for their efforts and support of the work that was done in the Committee this year, and I thank you for the continued support from the Majority Conference in the Committee's operations.

Sincerely,

Senator Samra Brouk, Chair  
55th Senate District



# **2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT**

## **NEW YORK STATE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH**

**Senator Samra G. Brouk, Chairperson**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Senator Nathalia Fernandez

Senator Gustavo Rivera

Senator Julia Salazar

Senator Lea Webb

Senator Patricia M. Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick

Senator Anthony H. Palumbo

### **COMMITTEE STAFF**

Jonathan Lang, Majority Counsel & Program Deputy Director

Jamie Salm, Majority Counsel & Program Senior Policy Advisor

Zena Shuber, Chief of Staff

Ernesto J. Porcari, Legislative Director, Counsel & Committee Clerk

Shaniya Morrison, Legislative Coordinator



## **COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND OVERVIEW**

The New York State Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health has legislative oversight responsibilities for issues concerning mental health needs of New Yorkers.

During the 2023 Legislative Session, 58 bills were referred to the Committee for its review. Of these bills, 14 were reported from the Committee. 9 were passed by the Senate, and 4 passed in both houses. This work was conducted through a series of three committee meetings. A list of all bills that were reported from the committee is provided at the end of this report.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Committee held one joint hearing. The topic of this hearing was to receive testimony on how to identify and examine best practices for integrating doulas into New York's maternal healthcare system.

## COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The following key bills were acted on by the committee in 2023:

- S1250 (Salazar): Establishes an LGBTQ+ youth and young adult suicide prevention task force; provides for the number of members, manner of appointment and the topics to be reviewed.  
*Passed Senate Only.*
- S1861 (Brouk): Establishes a Black youth suicide prevention task force to study the current mental health practices and suicide prevention efforts of Black youth age 5 through 18 years and make recommendations therefor; provides for the number of members, manner of appointment and the topics to be reviewed.  
*Vetoed Memo, 40.*
- S3587 (Helming): Creates the twelve member rural suicide prevention council to examine the causes of rural suicides or attempts and to make recommendations for rural suicide reduction.  
*Passed Senate Only.*
- S5082 (Fernandez): Establishes a Latina suicide prevention task force; and provides for the repeal of such provisions upon the expiration thereof.  
*Vetoed Memo, 79.*

The committee also held the following hearing:

- The Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health held a Joint-Public Hearing with the Senate Standing Committee on Health to receive testimony on how to identify and examine best practices for integrating doulas into New York's maternal healthcare system. The focus of having a hearing on doulas, who are nonclinical professionals providing guidance during and after pregnancy, is the high maternal mortality rate in the United States, and New York itself. The rates of mothers dying from pregnancy and childbirth complications are high compared to other wealthy countries, but they are even higher for Black women. In New York, Black women are five times more likely to die in childbirth compared to white mothers. The findings of the hearing included but were not limited to:
  - Increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates to \$1,930, which would cover eight pre- and post-natal visits as well as delivery support.
  - Establishing funding mechanisms for community doula organizations outside of Medicaid increases.
  - Elevating the status and integration of doulas in our hospitals and medical facilities.

A complete list of all chaptered bills and a summary of committee activity is provided at the end of this report.



## TWO HOUSE BILLS

In 2023, 4 of the 58 bills referred to the Standing Committee on Mental Health passed both houses of the Legislature. Of these bills, the Governor has signed 0 and vetoed 3 and action remains on 1.

| <b>Bill</b>                       | <b>Sponsor</b>     | <b>Summary</b>   | <b>Action</b>                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--|------------------------------|
| S1861                             | Brouk              | Establishes a Black youth suicide prevention task force  | Vetoed Memo 40 of 2023       |
| S5082                             | Fernandez          | Establishes a Latina suicide prevention task force; and provides for the repeal of such provisions upon the expiration thereof         | Vetoed Memo 79 of 2023       |
| S5178                             | Brouk              | Establishes a task force to study aging in place in mental health housing  | Vetoed Memo 80 of 2023       |
| S7274<br>(Substituted<br>by A793) | Parker<br>(Hunter) | Requires the office of mental health to establish a training program for the diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder | On the<br>Governor's<br>Desk |

## SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

| <b>Bill No.</b> | <b>Sponsor</b> | <b>Summary</b>   | <b>Significant Action</b>                                |
|-----------------|----------------|--|--|
| S1250           | Salazar        | Establishes an LGBTQ+ youth and young adult suicide prevention task force; provides for the number of members, manner of appointment and the topics to be reviewed   | Passed Senate Only.                                      |
| S1861           | Brouk          | Establishes a Black youth suicide prevention task force to study the current mental health practices and suicide prevention efforts of Black youth age 5 through 18 years and make recommendations therefor; provides for the number of members, manner of appointment and the topics to be reviewed.  | Vetoed Memo 40 of 2023.                                  |
| S1866           | Brouk          | Adds fetal alcohol spectrum disorders to the definition of developmental disability.   | Reported and committed to the Committee on Disabilities. |
| S2359           | Brouk          | Directs the commissioner of mental health to establish a maternal mental health workgroup to study and issue recommendations related to maternal mental health and perinatal and postpartum mood and anxiety disorders; identifies underrepresented and vulnerable populations and risk factors in the state for maternal mental health disorders that may occur during pregnancy and through the first postpartum year. | Passed Senate Only.                                      |
| S3115           | Mannion        | Relates to requiring application fees for the issuance of operating certificates be deposited into the mental illness anti-stigma fund.  | Reported and committed to the Committee on Finance.      |
| S3587           | Helming        | Creates the twelve member rural suicide prevention council to examine the causes of rural suicides or attempts and to make recommendations for rural suicide reduction.  | Passed Senate Only.                                      |
| S4371           | Fernandez      | Requires a certified dietitian, pursuant to the education law, on-site during hours of operation in order to apply as a comprehensive care center for eating disorders.  | Reported and committed to the Committee on Finance.      |
| S5082           | Fernandez      | Establishes a Latina suicide prevention task force; provides for the number of members, manner of appointment and the topics to be reviewed.   | Vetoed Memo 79 of 2023.                                  |
| S5178           | Brouk          | Establishes a task force to study aging in place in mental health housing; provides for the repeal of such task force upon expiration thereof.   | Vetoed Memo 80 of 2023.                                  |

|        |          |   |  |
|--------|----------|---|--|
| S5367  | Harckham | Establishes parity in reimbursement rates for the first twenty-four hours of supportive stabilization services provided that are substantially equivalent to crisis stabilization center services.  | Reported and committed to the Committee on Finance.        |
| S6042  | Parker   | Requires the establishment of community housing waiting lists within the office of mental health service system; directs each provider of housing services in the office of mental health system to provide, on a monthly basis, the office of mental health with a list of each person referred to, admitted to, applying for, withdrawing an application for and denied admission to housing provided by such provider; requires the community-based agency performing assessments of persons with a documented mental illness to provide the office with the names of such who have been assessed and who meet the eligibility criteria for the array of funded and/or licensed housing programs; requires such office to publish such waiting lists on a monthly basis. | Passed Senate Only.  |
| S5516A | Brouk    | Relates to the geriatric demonstration program to promote mental health and home care collaboration; authorizes the commissioner of mental health to waive rules and regulations to address barriers to participation in the program.   | Passed Senate Only.  |
| S7274  | Parker   | Requires the office of mental health to establish a training program for the diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder for military veterans; the program shall include a component on military cultural competency and shall be intended for the training of mental health providers and mental health clinicians; certification of the completion of the program may be provided to participants through the office.  | Substituted for A793 Hunter and is on the Governor's Desk. |











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**New York State Senate Standing Committee  
on **Mental Health****