



Hon. Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Governor Hochul:

Today, elected leaders and community partners in the Greater Rochester Area are reaching out to request your support for critical legislation voted on earlier this year, A.5088/S.4266. This legislation, sponsored by Assemblymember Reyes and Senator Webb, would establish **“a task force on missing women and girls who are Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) to develop policy changes that will work to address the lack of care and concern for missing and murdered BIPOC women and girls with New York State governmental agencies”**

Statistically, cases of missing BIPOC women and girls are frequently treated with less urgency, care, and attention than other cases. These cases are often classified as runaways, which further reduces the efforts being made to find them, while their families suffer. The task force created by this bill will be charged with identifying the discrepancies in care for missing BIPOC women and girls, and will outline policies and procedures that will help solve cases and reunite families.

This is an issue of great significance to our community. Earlier this week, the body of 16 year old Jakarah Lopez-Moore was discovered in an industrial park, with investigators calling her death a homicide. Lopez-Moore disappeared on August 27th, and despite her phone and social media accounts remaining inactive, her case was classified as a runaway. As our community mourns the tragic loss of Jakarah, we are also faced with the question of what the outcome may have been had an AMBER alert been issued, or if appropriate resources were dedicated toward finding her.

With this renewed focus on missing children, the Rochester Police Department confirmed in media events that there are 63 current open cases involving missing juveniles, most of whom are Black and Brown children. This is unacceptable, and a failure to act only further perpetuates the notion that these lives matter less than others. It is clear that our current system is deeply flawed, and it must be thoroughly examined and changed to equitably serve all New Yorkers. Signing A5088/S4266 into law to create this task force is an integral first step.

We request your support for this lifesaving legislation, so that we can begin the work to ensure every missing child is searched for with the same resources and commitment—regardless of their race, zip code, and socioeconomic status.

Sincerely,



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Samra Brouk  
*Senator, District 55*



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