



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian X. Foley

## Why I Sponsored a Resolution Expelling Sen. Monserrate

BRIAN X. FOLEY January 10, 2010

| ISSUE: **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

I wanted to share with you a recent column I wrote for the Huffington Post, a nationally read newsblog, explaining why I am pushing to expel Sen. Hiram Monserrate from the New York State Senate. You can read my post by visiting the Huffington Post website ([www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com)) or simply scrolling down. [Why I'm Introducing a Resolution to Expel Sen. Monserrate from the NY State Senate](#)

Huffington Post - January 9, 2010

By Senator Brian X. Foley

When I speak with my colleagues and friends about my first year as a member of the New York State Senate, I often hear remarks such as "you picked one heck of a time to go to Albany" and "that place must be such a mess." As our nation confronts one of the greatest economic challenges ever, New York State has been hit particularly hard, given our over-reliance on Wall Street for revenue.

Of course, the economic outlook is hardly the only reason people are surprised that I chose to join the state senate when I did.

While Albany has long been mired in mismanagement and dysfunction, New York State's capital gained added attention this past year as our efforts to reform the legislature came head to head with the trappings of dysfunction, partisan bickering, and the old game of Albany Power Politics.

An episode that brought great shame to the legislature, and indeed our entire state, was the behavior of one particular senator who committed domestic violence against his girlfriend, shortly after being voted in to the Senate.

For those who are not familiar with the case, here is a brief synopsis: In October 2009, State Senator Hiram Monserrate was convicted of a misdemeanor assault in relation to domestic violence charges that involved Senator Monserrate allegedly using a broken glass to slash his girlfriend, Karla Giraldo, across her face. Monserrate, who would later claim that it was all a "terrible accident," was **caught on videotape** violently dragging Ms. Giraldo through the lobby of his apartment.

After initially telling doctors at the hospital emergency room that Monserrate had purposely slashed her face in jealous rage upon finding another man's card in her bag, Ms. Giraldo decided not to cooperate with the prosecution. Without the victim's testimony, the prosecution could not secure a felony charge. However, the video tape, along with other circumstantial evidence, was enough to land Monserrate a conviction of misdemeanor assault. In addition, Monserrate would earn a stinging rebuke from a bi-partisan Senate committee investigating his conduct (Monserrate refused to cooperate with the committee's investigation). Just last week, the committee unanimously recommended that the Senate sanction Senator Monserrate.

Given this recommendation and Senator Monserrate's appalling behavior, I am introducing a

resolution to expel him from the New York State Senate. Domestic violence has no place in our society. It certainly does not have a place in our legislature.

In the year 2010 violence against women simply cannot be tolerated, whether the culprit is an everyday person or a powerful elected official.

I fully understand that expelling Mr. Monserrate will cost my conference a crucial Democratic vote (Democrats currently control the Senate with a 32-30 margin) and may make me, as the sponsor of the expulsion resolution, unpopular with my own party leadership.

However, standing up against domestic violence is a cause worth any political price necessary.

By simply giving Mr. Monserrate a slap on the wrist, we would be sending exactly the wrong signal to both men and women: you can get away with violence against women if you hold a position of power. Mr. Monserrate's actions represent a pattern of behavior unbecoming of a senator.

The New York State Senate is a place where we work to achieve reform and help our state turn the corner on this recession. It should also be a place where we openly debate and disagree with each other. But I will not allow it to be a place that welcomes those who inflict violence upon women, whether they're Democrats or Republicans.

We can start by expelling Senator Monserrate and standing up against domestic violence.

*Senator Brian X. Foley is a member of the New York State Senate and a long time advocate for victims of domestic violence. He was elected in 2008 following a successful tenure as the Town of Brookhaven Supervisor where he was the first Democratic supervisor in four decades. Senator Foley continues to serve on the board of the Suffolk County Coalition Against Domestic Violence.*