

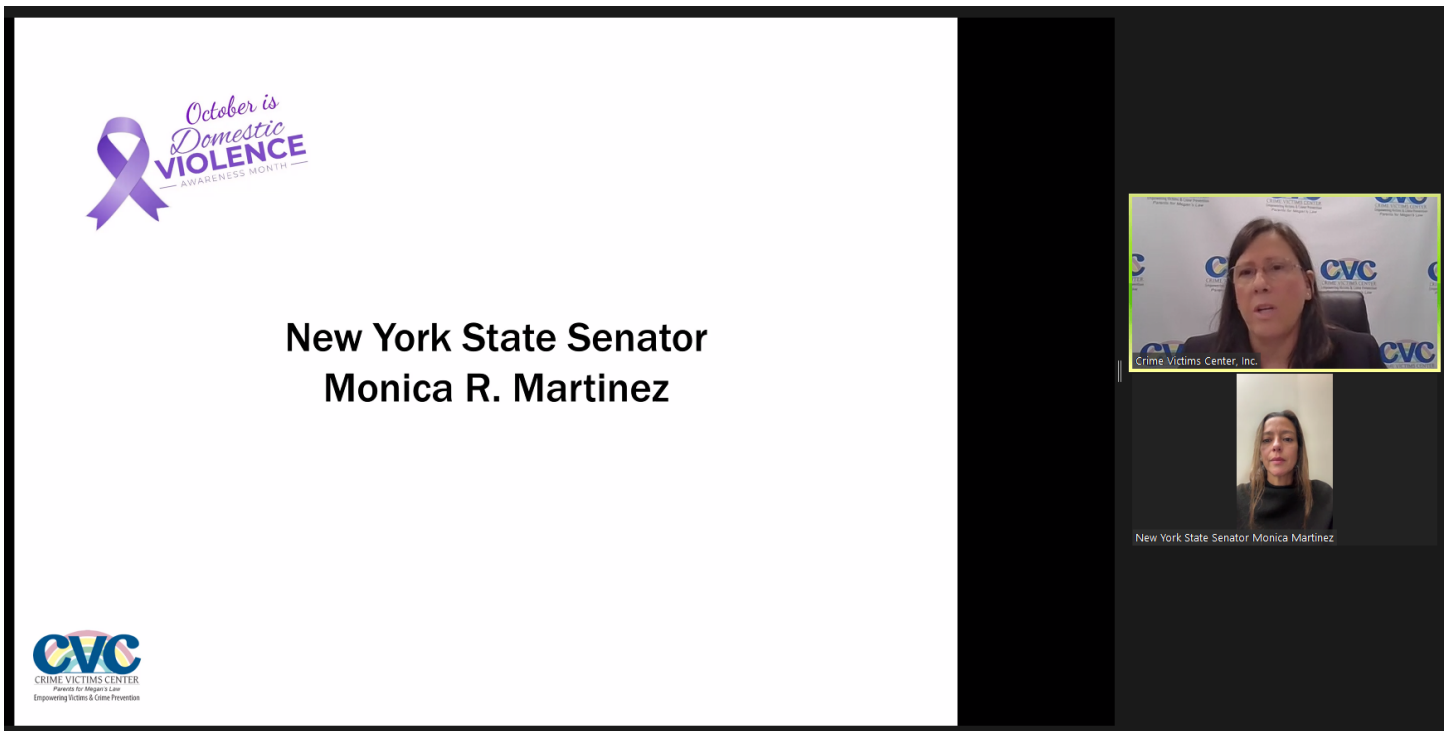


PRESS RELEASE
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To Protect Victims of Intimate Partner Abuse, Sen. Martinez Presses for Protections Against Threats of Private Image-Based Exploitation

In Domestic Violence Awareness Month address, Martinez pushes to close legal loopholes that leave victims vulnerable to coercion and manipulation.



HAUPPAUGE, N.Y. – October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and in a speech to attendees of the [Crime Victims Center's](#) third annual virtual conference on the topic, New York state Sen. Monica R. Martinez renewed her call to strengthen the state's protections against the non-consensual release of intimate images and videos to include making threats to do so.

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During what was, at times, an impassioned speech to meeting participants, Sen. Martinez said, “New York took a major step forward in 2019 when it enacted legislation I developed – similar to the law that I co-sponsored while in the Suffolk County Legislature – to criminalize the non-consensual release of intimate images.”

“More needs to be done, however, because abusers don’t just harm with their actions; they also terrorize with their threats and have exploited a gap in the original law that didn’t address the threat of releasing these images. This has left victims vulnerable to ongoing coercion and manipulation.”

“We cannot allow abusers to continue using threats as a tool of control. Expanding protections will break this cycle, sending a clear message that victims never relinquish autonomy over their lives and bodies.”

Earlier this year, the New York State Senate approved [Martinez’s legislation](#) to enhance the Unlawful Dissemination or Publication of an Intimate Image statute, commonly referred to as the “Revenge Porn Law.” The proposal, however, wasn’t voted on by the Assembly before it adjourned in June. If enacted, violators could face up to one year in jail and fines.

Sen. Martinez began her work to protect victims of “revenge porn” during her tenure with the Suffolk County Legislature, where she passed a ban on the dissemination and publication of explicit and intimate images without consent. After joining the state Senate, Sen. Martinez [led the historic 2019 effort](#) to criminalize coercion statewide through the non-consensual release of intimate images and videos.

In April, [two victims were awarded a total of \\$3.4 million in damages](#), plus attorney fees, by a New York court following their separate intimate encounters with a Long Island resident being recorded and posted online without their consent in an attempt to shame them. According to the lawsuits, the consequences of the recordings made and released in 2020 were still causing the victims to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and damage to their personal and professional reputations at the time of the suit’s filing.

As part of its Domestic Violence Awareness Month campaign, the Crime Victims Center leads a number of efforts to highlight intimate partner abuse, warning signs, and resources for victims. In addition to hosting today’s virtual conference, the organization also conducts outreach on [social media](#) to inform the public and connect survivors with support services.