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NOW-NYC Urges Judge to Sentence Hiram Monserrate to Maximum *Elected Leaders Must Be Held to the Highest Standard*

New York, NY, December 3, 2009 – The National Organization for Women of New York City is urging Justice William M. Erlbaum to sentence Senator Hiram Monserrate on December 4, 2009 to the fullest extent on his conviction of assault.

“Domestic violence is a crime that is poisonous to our community and families,” said Sonia Ossorio, president of the National Organization for Women of New York City. “Allowing an elected leader to walk away from the crime of assaulting his intimate partner would be an outrageous travesty of justice and the wrong message to the community.”

A 2008 report by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, reports that nearly half of fatal violence against women (44%) was confirmed to be the result of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). In 2005, nearly 4,000 NYC women were treated in emergency departments for injuries that they acknowledged were due to IPV. Many more were treated for assault injuries of unknown origin.

“The amount of domestic violence in our city is staggering,” Ossorio said. “The problem transcends class, race and age. Prevention, protection and prosecution are the ways in which we can begin to see a change. This high-profile case of intimate partner violence sheds a harsh spotlight on a crime that is ravishing our community. We went after crack dealers with harsh sentences during the crack epidemic, we need to go after abusers as vigorously.”

The National Organization for Women is the nation’s largest organization working to advance women’s rights and improve women’s lives. The New York City Chapter of NOW, founded in 1966, is one of the largest chapters in the country with over 5,000 members locally and 35,000 statewide. NOW-NYC works to protect women’s reproductive choices, end violence against women and eliminate sex discrimination in our schools, workplaces, and the justice system in New York.

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