



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NOW-NYC Calls for New Leader To Be Selected For Puerto Rican Day Parade *Says Violent Abuser, Osvaldo Rios, Should Be Withdrawn From Role*

New York, NY, May 28, 2010 – The National Organization for Women-New York City is outraged at the selection of Osvaldo Rios, a Puerto Rican soap star that has served jail time for abusing his partner, to lead the Puerto Rican Day Parade in the role of Padrino Internacional. The selection was announced by the Board of the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Inc.

Sonia Ossorio, Executive Director of NOW-NYC, says, “There is an epidemic of intimate partner violence, and it is frankly unacceptable for our communities to blatantly ignore it. By selecting Osvaldo Rios to lead the parade, the organizers are turning a blind eye to how domestic violence is destroying our families and communities. The parade is a New York City tradition that intends to celebrate the contributions of the Puerto Rican community, and Rios will only detract from that.”

NOW-NYC applauds the work of local leaders who have called for Rios to be withdrawn from the role. A joint statement calling for his withdrawal was released by City Council Members Melissa Mark-Viverito, Annabel Palma, Rosie Mendez, Julissa Ferreras, Maria del Carmen Arroyo and Assembly Member Carmen Arroyo on May 21.

The news of Rios’ selection comes on the heels of an educational program about intimate partner violence and the “men who abuse” that NOW-NYC hosted just this week. Furthermore, the organization has been working during this New York State legislative session to pass a new anti-violence bill that would criminalize strangulation in New York State, a method frequently used by abusive partners.

Ossorio adds, “As advocates that are on the front lines of fighting violence against women, we are well aware of how much work there is to be done. We need to change both policies and minds, if we are going to make a dent in stopping the violence.”

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 the largest chapter in the country with 5,000 members locally and 35,000 statewide. NOW-NYC works to promote women’s reproductive rights, secure women’s economic empowerment, and end violence and discrimination against women.

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