

## COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

**KATE BROWNING**  
County Legislator, 3rd District  
Public Safety Committee, Chair



COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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**Media Release**  
September 19, 2014

# **Legislators and Parents for Megan's Law Outraged Over Re-Election of Conservative Party Chairman**

## *Conservative Party of Suffolk Needs to Find Its Moral Code*

**Hauppauge, NY** – A coalition of Suffolk County Legislators, Conservative Party committee members and Parents for Megan's Law and the Crime Victims Center Executive Director Laura Ahearn are voicing their outrage at the re-election of disgraced Conservative Party Chairman Edward Walsh, which took place at the Suffolk County Conservative Party convention on Wednesday night. The selection of Chairman Walsh raises many moral questions since he has been identified as a suspect of a Sheriff's investigation into stealing county time, an investigation that has been handed over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In addition, Mr. Walsh was sentenced for committing a sexual assault misdemeanor as a college football player in the 1980's, and more recently he admitted that he was present at a raid on an illegal gambling ring as reported by Newsday.

Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley), who chairs the Suffolk County Legislature's Public Safety Committee, has continually called for elected officials that receive the Conservative Party endorsement to denounce Mr. Walsh's actions, and to decline the party's endorsement until new leadership is chosen. With the recent public outcry to address domestic violence incidents in the wake of several NFL players being arrested for such crimes, professional teams have taken swift action to deactivate players, and the NFL has taken the moral steps to increase punishments for these crimes. Chairman Edward Walsh's misdemeanor sexual charge that recently came to light should receive a comparable response from party members, but instead the party has chosen to ignore these serious legal matters.

"Edward Walsh's history of illegal behavior towards women cannot be ignored," stated Legislator Browning. "How anyone can support his leadership role with a party that influences judgeships and/or take his endorsement with the knowledge of his misdemeanor assault on a woman is inexcusable. The Conservative Party will continue to operate with a black eye until he is removed as chair."

Laura Ahearn expressed disappointment and frustration with the Conservative Party, stating that "The re-election of Edward Walsh as Chairman is hypocritical and inconsistent with the ideology the Party proffers across New York State and the nation. His re-election is an affront to every woman who has been a victim of violence. It is my sincere hope that the individual judges and elected officials to whom Walsh takes credit for seating are evaluating whether they genuinely feel that their values and the values of the Conservative Party are being advanced by Mr. Walsh – a person who served a sentence for a sex offense, an offense he did not reveal when making application for a job he currently holds, where his employer is seeking his termination and the FBI investigating him for stealing time from the County."

The 2014 New York State Conservative Party's legislative priorities highlight the need to address sexual assaults regardless of when the crime occurs. The agenda states: "*We support the repeal of the statute of*

*limitations for rape, sexual assault, and other serious violent felony offenses for all offenders.*” How can a party that seeks greater justice for victims of sexual crimes elect as its party leader an individual who was sentenced for a sexual assault? Until the party addresses this glaring hypocrisy its credibility will remain in question.

"Bullies, wife beaters and sexual offenders should not be granted positions of prestige and power," stated County Legislator Kara Hahn. "Walsh's reelection makes a mockery of the party's own platform, which professes to support sexual abuse victims. The state Conservative Party should stand with women and refuse to validate Walsh as chair."

"The Conservative Party must come to terms with the fact that their leader has shown a clear indication that he believes he is above the law," stated Majority Leader and County Legislator Rob Calarco. "The public demands and deserves the highest integrity among our elected officials and party leadership, in all parties. It is time for the party that purports to support law and order to stand up for their professed values."

"I'm generally hesitant to get into inner party concerns but the extraordinary step of Sheriff DeMarco bringing to light potentially illegal activity by Mr. Walsh while employed by Suffolk County is reason enough for concern," said Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory.

"Not only does the Conservative Party continue to have a man who sexually assaulted a woman as its chair, but every party member that voted to re-elect him is supporting a sexual predator," stated former Smithtown Conservative Party Chairman and current committee member Dan Donnelly. "This is a disgrace for our party and I am ashamed of the undemocratic process that prevailed at the convention, where my calls for an individual vote were ignored."

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