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### Mahoney, Negron to speak Monday

**Two candidates for District 16 Congressional seat to address Forum Club luncheon.**

By [MICHELE DARGAN](#), Daily News Staff Writer

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Last month, U.S. Rep. Mark Foley didn't have widespread name recognition outside South Florida and the six-term Republican was expected to easily win re-election against unknown Democrat Tim Mahoney.

But all that changed on Sept. 29, when Foley resigned in disgrace amid revelations of sexually explicit Internet message exchanges with teenage congressional pages.

Now, Mahoney, a Palm Beach Gardens businessman, and Joe Negron, a state representative from Stuart, are vying for Foley's District 16 Congressional seat. The Foley scandal has thrown the two men and the race into the national spotlight. The two will square off Monday at a noon luncheon of The Forum Club of the Palm Beaches at the Kravis Center's Cohen Pavilion.

Mahoney has moved to the forefront while Negron, an attorney, will have an uphill battle because his name won't be on the ballot. Foley resigned too late to print new ballots. A Florida judge ruled Thursday that it is illegal to post notices in polling places saying a ballot cast for Foley counts for Negron.

For Democrats to gain control of the House, they need to gain 15 seats nationwide. According to [realclearpolitics.com](#), a Web site that provides election news, statistics, polls and data, Florida's District 16 is the third most vulnerable Republican seat in the country. The district stretches coast-to-coast across eight Florida counties.

James Campbell, a political science professor at the University of Buffalo, said he's never heard of a case in which people vote for one candidate and those votes automatically are transferred to another candidate — particularly with no clarifying information available at the polls.

"I think most would write off this district as a Republican stronghold based on the lateness of the scandal, and the other thing is that the structure of the ballot is not conducive to voters registering their intent," Campbell said.

Pat Sellers, an associate professor of political science at Davidson College in North Carolina, has never heard of this type of situation either. He pointed to the case of Minnesota Democratic Sen. Paul Wellstone, who died in a plane crash less than two weeks before the 2002 election. He was replaced by Walter Mondale, who lost, but Minnesota state law allowed for Mondale's name to be put on the ballot.

"There is a lot of variation of state law on that," Sellers said.

Sellers also noted the 2002 New Jersey senatorial race. Robert Toricelli dropped out five weeks before the election after improper dealings with a campaign donor. The Democrats successfully won a court fight to get replacement Frank Lautenberg's name on the ballot and Lautenberg won.

Campbell and Sellers said it will be very difficult for Negron to win if voters must cast their vote on a ballot with Foley's name.

"This is up there with the butterfly ballot and hanging chads," Campbell said. "Another voting peculiarity in Florida, home of odd ballots."

To attend Monday's luncheon, tickets must be ordered in advance by calling 304-0570. Member tickets are \$25. Guest and applicant tickets are \$35. Public tickets are \$50.

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