

By Senator Miller

18-47-03

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to neighborhood crime watch  
3           programs; authorizing a county sheriff or  
4           municipal police department to establish  
5           neighborhood crime watch programs; providing  
6           for residents and business owners located  
7           within the county or municipality to  
8           participate in the program; prohibiting the  
9           harassment of a participant of a neighborhood  
10          crime watch program; providing a penalty;  
11          defining the term "harass"; providing an  
12          effective date.

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14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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16           Section 1. Establishment of neighborhood crime watch  
17 programs.--A county sheriff or municipal police department may  
18 establish neighborhood crime watch programs within the county  
19 or municipality. The participants of a neighborhood crime  
20 watch program shall include, but need not be limited to,  
21 residents of the county or municipality and owners of  
22 businesses located within the county or municipality.

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24           Section 2. Harassment of participant of neighborhood  
25 crime watch program prohibited; penalty; definition.--

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27           (1) It is a misdemeanor of the first degree for a  
28 person to willfully harass a person who is a member of a  
29 neighborhood crime watch group for the purpose of intimidating  
30 or retaliating against that person for his or her  
31 participation in a neighborhood crime watch program. It is a  
violation of this section for a person to harass a member of a  
neighborhood crime watch group while such member is traveling

1 to or from a neighborhood crime watch meeting, actively  
2 participating in a neighborhood crime watch meeting or  
3 activity, or actively participating in an ongoing criminal  
4 investigation, as designated by a law enforcement officer.

5 (2) As used in this section, the term "harass" means  
6 to engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person  
7 which causes substantial emotional distress in that person and  
8 serves no legitimate purpose.

9 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.

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SENATE SUMMARY

Authorizes the establishment of neighborhood crime watch programs within a county or municipality by the sheriff or municipal police department. Provides that it is a first-degree misdemeanor to harass a participant of a neighborhood crime watch program for the purpose of intimidating or retaliating against that person for his or her participation in the neighborhood crime watch program.