

By Senators Miller, Aronberg, Crist, Dawson, Siplin, Bennett, Campbell, Margolis and Saunders

18-740-04

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.

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

25 (1) It is a misdemeanor of the first degree for a
 26 person to willfully harass a person who is a member of a
 27 neighborhood crime watch group for the purpose of intimidating
 28 or retaliating against that person for his or her
 29 participation in a neighborhood crime watch program. It is a
 30 violation of this section for a person to harass a member of a
 31 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, 2004.

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12 SENATE SUMMARY

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