

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

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

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

21           Section 2. Harassment of participant of neighborhood crime  
 22 watch program prohibited; penalty; definition.--

23           (1) It shall be a misdemeanor of the first degree,  
 24 punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083, for any  
 25 person to willfully harass, threaten, or intimidate an  
 26 identifiable member of a neighborhood crime watch program while  
 27 such member is engaged in, or traveling to or from, an organized  
 28 neighborhood crime watch program activity or a member who is

29 | participating in an ongoing criminal investigation, as  
30 | designated by a law enforcement officer.

31 | (2) As used in this section, the term:

32 | (a) "Harass" means to engage in a course of conduct  
33 | directed at a specific person which causes substantial emotional  
34 | distress in that person and serves no legitimate purpose.

35 | (b) "Organized neighborhood crime watch program activity"  
36 | means any prearranged event, meeting, or other scheduled  
37 | activity, or neighborhood patrol, conducted by or at the  
38 | direction of a neighborhood crime watch program or the program's  
39 | authorized designee.

40 | Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004.