

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to impeding, threatening, or harassing
3 first responders; creating s. 843.31, F.S.; providing
4 definitions; specifying that peaceful recording or
5 observation is not harassment; prohibiting approaching
6 a first responder or remaining within a specified
7 distance of such person with the intent to impede,
8 threaten, or harass or physically prevent the person
9 from performing lawful duties after receiving a
10 warning not to approach; providing criminal penalties;
11 providing an effective date.

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

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15 Section 1. Section 843.31, Florida Statutes, is created to
16 read:

17 843.31 Approaching a first responder after a warning with
18 the intent to impede, threaten, or harass or physically prevent
19 the first responder from performing lawful duties.-

20 (1) As used in this section, the term:

21 (a) "First responder" includes a law enforcement officer
22 as defined in s. 943.10(1), a firefighter as defined in s.
23 784.07(1), and an emergency medical care provider as defined in
24 s. 784.07(1).

25 (b) "Harass" means to willfully engage in a course of

26 | conduct directed at a first responder which intentionally causes
 27 | substantial emotional distress in that first responder and
 28 | serves no legitimate purpose. The peaceful audio or video
 29 | recording or eyewitness observing of a first responder is a
 30 | legitimate purpose that does not constitute harassment.

31 | (2) (a) It is unlawful for a person, after receiving a
 32 | verbal warning not to approach from a person he or she knows or
 33 | reasonably should know is a first responder, who is engaged in
 34 | the lawful performance of a legal duty, to knowingly and
 35 | willfully violate such warning and continue to approach or
 36 | remain within 20 feet of the first responder with the intent to:

37 | 1. Interrupt, disrupt, hinder, impede, or interfere with
 38 | the first responder's ability to perform such duty;

39 | 2. Threaten the first responder or physically prevent the
 40 | first responder from performing his or her lawful duties; or

41 | 3. Harass the first responder.

42 | (b) A person who violates this subsection commits a
 43 | misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s.
 44 | 775.082 or s. 775.083.

45 | Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2023.