

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

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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, 2024.