

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,
 5 photographing, or observation is not harassment;
 6 prohibiting approaching a first responder or remaining
 7 within a specified distance of such person with the
 8 intent to impede, threaten, or harass the person after
 9 receiving a warning not to approach; providing
 10 criminal penalties; providing an effective date.

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

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

16 843.31 Approaching a first responder with specified intent
 17 after a warning.-

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

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

23 (b) "Harass" means to willfully engage in a course of
 24 conduct directed at a first responder which intentionally causes
 25 substantial emotional distress in that first responder and

26 serves no legitimate purpose. The peaceful audio or video
27 recording, photographing, or eyewitness observing of a first
28 responder is a legitimate purpose that does not, by itself,
29 constitute harassment.

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

- 36 1. Interrupt, disrupt, hinder, impede, or interfere with
37 the first responder's ability to perform such duty;
38 2. Threaten the first responder with physical harm; or
39 3. Harass the first responder.

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

43 Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2024.