

By the Committees on Community Affairs; and Criminal Justice;
and Senator Avila

578-03555-23

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to impeding, threatening, or harassing
3 first responders; creating s. 843.31, F.S.; defining
4 the terms "first responder" and "harass"; prohibiting
5 a person, after receiving a warning not to approach
6 from a first responder who is engaged in the lawful
7 performance of a legal duty, to violate such warning
8 and approach or remain within a specified distance of
9 the first responder with specified intent; 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 after a warning with
17 intent to impede, provoke, or harass.-

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

19 (a) "First responder" includes a law enforcement officer as
20 defined in s. 943.10(1), a correctional probation officer as
21 defined in s. 943.10(3), a firefighter as defined in s. 784.07,
22 and an emergency medical care provider as defined in s. 784.07.

23 (b) "Harass" means to engage in a course of conduct
24 directed at a first responder which causes substantial emotional
25 distress in that first responder and serves no legitimate
26 purpose.

27 (2) (a) It is unlawful for a person, after receiving a
28 warning not to approach from a first responder who is engaged in
29 the lawful performance of a legal duty, to violate such warning

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30 and approach or remain within 14 feet, roughly the length of an
31 average midsize sedan vehicle, of the first responder with the
32 intent to:

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

35 2. Threaten the first responder with physical harm; or

36 3. Harass the first responder or make so much noise that a
37 first responder is prevented from performing their official
38 duties or providing medical aid.

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

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