

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.