

CHAPTER 2004-18

House Bill No. 511

An act relating to neighborhood crime watch programs; authorizing a county sheriff or municipal police department to establish neighborhood crime watch programs; providing for residents and business owners located within the county or municipality to participate in the program; prohibiting the harassment of a participant of a neighborhood crime watch program; providing criminal penalties; providing definitions; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Establishment of neighborhood crime watch programs.—A county sheriff or municipal police department may establish neighborhood crime watch programs within the county or municipality. The participants of a neighborhood crime watch program shall include, but need not be limited to, residents of the county or municipality and owners of businesses located within the county or municipality.

Section 2. Harassment of participant of neighborhood crime watch program prohibited; penalty; definition.—

(1) It shall be a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083, for any person to willfully harass, threaten, or intimidate an identifiable member of a neighborhood crime watch program while such member is engaged in, or traveling to or from, an organized neighborhood crime watch program activity or a member who is participating in an ongoing criminal investigation, as designated by a law enforcement officer.

(2) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Harass” means to engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific person which causes substantial emotional distress in that person and serves no legitimate purpose.

(b) “Organized neighborhood crime watch program activity” means any prearranged event, meeting, or other scheduled activity, or neighborhood patrol, conducted by or at the direction of a neighborhood crime watch program or the program’s authorized designee.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004.

Approved by the Governor April 22, 2004.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 22, 2004.