CHAPTER 2024-85

Senate Bill No. 184

An act relating to impeding, threatening, or harassing first responders; creating s. 843.31, F.S.; providing definitions; prohibiting a person, after receiving a warning not to approach from a first responder who is engaged in the lawful performance of a legal duty, from violating such warning and approaching or remaining within a specified distance of the first responder with specified intent; providing criminal penalties; providing an effective date.

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

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

843.31   Approaching a first responder with specified intent after a warning.—

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

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

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

(2)(a)   It is unlawful for a person, after receiving a verbal warning not to approach from a person he or she knows or reasonably should know is a first responder, who is engaged in the lawful performance of a legal duty, to knowingly and willfully violate such warning and approach or remain within 25 feet of the first responder with the intent to:

1.   Impede or interfere with the first responder's ability to perform such duty;

2.   Threaten the first responder with physical harm; or

3.   Harass the first responder.

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

Section 2.   This act shall take effect January 1, 2025.

Approved by the Governor April 12, 2024.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 12, 2024.