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H.B. 20
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. T. Hall and Plummer

Courtney McGowan, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Creates the offense of harassing an emergency service responder, a first degree misdemeanor.
- Modifies the offense of menacing by prohibiting certain conduct committed against a probation officer or a family or household member or co-worker of a probation officer.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Menacing

The bill modifies current law regarding menacing by including a “probation officer” within the definition of “emergency service responder.” As a result, if a person knowingly places or attempts to place another person in reasonable fear of physical harm or death by displaying a deadly weapon, regardless of whether that deadly weapon displayed is operable or inoperable and either of the following applies, the person is guilty of menacing:¹

- The other person is a probation officer, the person knows or reasonably should know that the other person is a probation officer, and it is the person’s specified purpose to engage in the specified conduct against a probation officer.
- The other person is a probation officer’s family or household member or co-worker, the person knows or reasonably should know that the other person is a probation officer’s family or household member or co-worker, and it is the person’s specific purpose to engage in the specified conduct against a probation officer’s family or household member or co-worker.

¹ R.C. 2903.22(A)(2).

The penalty for menacing under the above-described circumstances is a fourth degree misdemeanor.²

The bill defines “probation officer” as a probation officer appointed by a municipal court, a county court, or a common pleas court.³

Harassing an emergency service responder

The bill creates the offense of “harassing an emergency service responder,” which prohibits a person from knowingly harassing an emergency service responder who is engaged in the lawful performance of a legal duty when both of the following apply:⁴

- The person received a warning from the emergency service responder not to approach;
- The person approached or remained within 14 feet of the emergency service responder after receiving the warning.

Harassing an emergency service responder is a first degree misdemeanor.⁵

The bill defines the following terms for the purposes of the offense of harassing an emergency service responder:

“**Emergency service responder**” means any law enforcement officer, first responder, emergency medical technician-basic, emergency medical technician-intermediate, emergency medical technician-paramedic, firefighter, or volunteer firefighter and also includes a probation officer.⁶

“**Harass**” means either to engage in a course of conduct that is directed at an emergency service responder, causes substantial emotional distress to the emergency service responder, and interferes with the emergency service responder lawfully performing a legal duty or to interrupt, disrupt, hinder, impede, or interfere with an emergency service responder’s ability to lawfully perform a legal duty.⁷

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	01-27-25

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² R.C. 2903.22(B).

³ R.C. 2903.22(D)(4).

⁴ R.C. 2927.31(B).

⁵ R.C. 2927.31(C).

⁶ R.C. 2903.22 and 2927.31(A)(1), by reference to R.C. 2903.13, not in the bill.

⁷ R.C. 2927.31(A)(2).