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H.B. 662
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Fischer and Newman

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SUMMARY

- Increases the penalty for disturbing a lawful meeting under certain circumstances.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Disturbing a lawful meeting with intent to disrupt religious worship

Under continuing law, a person is guilty of disturbing a lawful meeting if the person does either of the following with purpose to prevent or disrupt a lawful meeting, procession, or gathering:[1]

- Does any act which obstructs or interferes with due conduct of such meeting, procession, or gathering;
- Makes any utterance, gesture, or display which outrages the sensibilities of the group.

Currently, disturbing a lawful meeting is generally a fourth degree misdemeanor, but if a person disturbs a lawful meeting under either of the following circumstances, disturbing a lawful meeting is a first degree misdemeanor:[2]

- The violation is committed with the intent to disturb or disquiet any assemblage of people met for religious worship at a tax-exempt place of worship, regardless of whether the conduct is within the place at which the assemblage is held or is on the property on which that place is located and disturbs the order and solemnity of the assemblage.

[1] R.C. 2917.12(A).

[2] R.C. 2917.12(B).

- The violation is committed with the intent to prevent, disrupt, or interfere with a virtual meeting or gathering of people for religious worship, through use of a computer, computer system, telecommunications device, or other electronic device or system, or in any other manner.

The bill increases the penalty for disturbing a lawful meeting to a fifth degree felony under either of the circumstances above.[3]

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	01-29-26

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[3] R.C. 2917.12(B).