

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- HARASSMENT

Introduced By: Senator Cynthia Armour Coyne

Date Introduced: March 24, 2022

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(by request)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 11 of the General Laws entitled "CRIMINAL OFFENSES" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 70

4 HARASSMENT

5 **11-70-1. Criminal harassment.**

6 A person is guilty of criminal harassment if that person willfully and maliciously engages
7 in a knowing pattern of conduct or series of acts over a period of time directed at a specific person,
8 which seriously alarms that person and would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial
9 emotional distress. The conduct or acts described in this subsection shall include, but not be limited
10 to, conduct or acts conducted by mail or by use of a telephonic or telecommunication device or
11 electronic communication device including, but not limited to, any device that transfers signs,
12 signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part
13 by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not
14 limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages or facsimile
15 communications.

16 **11-70-2. Penalties for violations.**

17 (a) Any person convicted of criminal harassment as provided under this chapter shall be
18 punished as follows:

19 (1) Any person convicted of a first offense shall be subject to imprisonment for not more

1 [than one year or by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars \(\\$500\) or both.](#)

2 [\(2\) Any person convicted of a second offense shall be subject to imprisonment for not more](#)
3 [than three \(3\) years or by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars \(\\$1,000\) or both.](#)

4 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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1 This act would create the offense of criminal harassment. Persons who commit such an
2 offense would be guilty of a misdemeanor for the first offense and felony for a second offense and
3 subject to fines and imprisonment.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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