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136th General Assembly
Regular Session
2025-2026

Sub. H. B. No. 20

To amend sections 2903.22 and 2921.31 of the
Revised Code to modify the offense of
obstructing official business when the victim is
an emergency service responder, to increase the
penalty for obstructing official business when
the victim is an emergency service responder who
is engaged in the lawful performance of a legal
duty, and to clarify that heightened penalties
apply for menacing a probation officer.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 2903.22 and 2921.31 of the
Revised Code be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2903.22. (A) (1) No person shall knowingly cause
another to believe that the offender will cause physical harm to
the person or property of the other person, the other person's
unborn, or a member of the other person's immediate family. In
addition to any other basis for the other person's belief that
the offender will cause physical harm to the person or property
of the other person, the other person's unborn, or a member of
the other person's immediate family, the other person's belief



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may be based on words or conduct of the offender that are 20
directed at or identify a corporation, association, or other 21
organization that employs the other person or to which the other 22
person belongs. 23

(2) No person shall knowingly place or attempt to place 24
another in reasonable fear of physical harm or death by 25
displaying a deadly weapon, regardless of whether the deadly 26
weapon displayed is operable or inoperable, if either of the 27
following applies: 28

(a) The other person is an emergency service responder, 29
the person knows or reasonably should know that the other person 30
is an emergency service responder, and it is the person's 31
specific purpose to engage in the specified conduct against an 32
emergency service responder. 33

(b) The other person is a family or household member or 34
co-worker of an emergency service responder, the person knows or 35
reasonably should know that the other person is a family or 36
household member or co-worker of an emergency service responder, 37
and it is the person's specific purpose to engage in the 38
specified conduct against a family or household member or co- 39
worker of an emergency service responder. 40

(B) Whoever violates this section is guilty of menacing. 41

Except as otherwise provided in this division, menacing is 42
a misdemeanor of the fourth degree. If the victim of the offense 43
is an officer or employee of a public children services agency 44
or a private child placing agency and the offense relates to the 45
officer's or employee's performance or anticipated performance 46
of official responsibilities or duties or if the victim of the 47
offense is an emergency service responder in the performance of 48

the responder's official duties, menacing is one of the 49
following: 50

(1) Except as otherwise provided in division (B) (2) of 51
this section, a misdemeanor of the first degree; 52

(2) If the offender previously has been convicted of or 53
pleaded guilty to an offense of violence, the victim of that 54
prior offense was an officer or employee of a public children 55
services agency or private child placing agency or an emergency 56
service responder, and that prior offense related to the 57
officer's or employee's performance or anticipated performance 58
of official responsibilities or duties or to the responder's 59
performance of the responder's official duties, a felony of the 60
fourth degree. 61

(C) A prosecution for a violation of this section does not 62
preclude a prosecution of a violation of any other section of 63
the Revised Code. One or more acts, a series of acts, or a 64
course of behavior that can be prosecuted under this section or 65
any other section of the Revised Code may be prosecuted under 66
this section, the other section of the Revised Code, or both 67
sections. However, if an offender is convicted of or pleads 68
guilty to a violation of this section and also is convicted of 69
or pleads guilty to a violation of section 2903.13 of the 70
Revised Code based on the same conduct involving the same victim 71
that was the basis of the violation of this section, the two 72
offenses are allied offenses of similar import under section 73
2941.25 of the Revised Code. 74

(D) As used in this section: 75

(1) "Emergency service responder," "family has the same 76
meaning as in section 2903.13 of the Revised Code and also 77

includes a probation officer. 78

(2) "Family or household member," and "co-worker" have the 79
same meanings as in section 2903.13 of the Revised Code. 80

~~(2)~~(3) "Organization" includes an entity that is a 81
governmental employer. 82

(4) "Probation officer" means a probation officer 83
appointed by a municipal court under section 1901.33 of the 84
Revised Code, a probation officer appointed by a county court 85
under section 1907.201 of the Revised Code, and a probation 86
officer appointed by a court of common pleas under section 87
2301.27 of the Revised Code. 88

Sec. 2921.31. (A) As used in this section: 89

(1) "Emergency service responder" has the same meaning as 90
in section 2903.22 of the Revised Code. 91

(2) "Warning" means a verbal command made by an emergency 92
service responder through which the emergency service responder 93
does both of the following: 94

(a) Commands a person to maintain the person's distance, 95
to stay away, to back away, to not interfere, or another similar 96
instruction; 97

(b) Communicates the verbal command in a manner such that 98
a reasonable person would believe that the person must comply 99
with the verbal command under the circumstances. 100

(B) No person, without privilege to do so and with purpose 101
to prevent, obstruct, or delay the performance by a public 102
official of any authorized act within the public official's 103
official capacity, shall do any act that hampers or impedes a 104
public official in the performance of the public official's 105

lawful duties. 106

~~(B)~~ (C) No person, without privilege to do so, and after 107
receiving a warning, shall knowingly approach or remain within 108
fifteen feet of an emergency service responder engaged in the 109
lawful performance of the responder's legal duty and do either 110
of the following: 111

(1) Impede or interfere with the emergency service 112
responder's ability to perform the responder's legal duty; 113

(2) Threaten the emergency service responder with physical 114
harm. 115

(D) (1) Whoever violates this section is guilty of 116
obstructing official business. Except as otherwise provided in 117
~~this division~~ divisions (D) (2), (3), and (4) of this section, 118
obstructing official business is a misdemeanor of the second 119
degree. 120

(2) If the victim is an emergency service responder 121
engaged in the lawful performance of the responder's legal duty, 122
and the responder issued a warning to the person before the 123
person engaged in or continued to engage in the conduct 124
described in division (B) of this section, obstructing official 125
business is a misdemeanor of the first degree. 126

(3) If a violation of this section creates a risk of 127
physical harm to ~~any~~ a person other than an emergency service 128
responder, obstructing official business is a felony of the 129
fifth degree. 130

(4) If a violation of this section creates a risk of 131
physical harm to an emergency service responder, obstructing 132
official business is a felony of the fourth degree. 133

Section 2. That existing sections 2903.22 and 2921.31 of	134
the Revised Code are hereby repealed.	135