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**HOUSE BILL 1139**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Leavitt, Reed, Bateman, Ramel, Orwall, Reeves, Bronoske, Ramos, Gregerson, Wylie, Thai, Pollet, Kloba, and Ormsby

AN ACT Relating to harassment of election officials; amending RCW 9A.46.020, 9A.90.120, and 40.24.030; and prescribing penalties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 9A.46.020 and 2011 c 64 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A person is guilty of harassment if the person, with intent to harass or intimidate any other person, and under circumstances not constituting cyber harassment, makes a communication and the communication:

(a) ((~~Without lawful authority, the person knowingly threatens:~~

~~(i) To cause~~)) (i) Uses any lewd, lascivious, indecent, or obscene words, images, or language, or suggests the commission of any lewd or lascivious act;

(ii) Contains a threat to inflict bodily injury immediately or in the future to the person threatened or to any other person; ((~~or~~

~~(ii) To cause physical damage to~~)) (iii) Contains a threat to damage, immediately or in the future, the property of ((~~a~~)) the person ((~~other than the actor~~)) threatened or of any other person; ((~~or~~

~~(iii) To~~)) (iv) Contains a threat to subject the person threatened or any other person to physical confinement or restraint; or

((~~(iv) Maliciously to~~)) (v) Contains a threat to maliciously do any other act which is intended to substantially harm the person threatened or ((~~another~~)) any other person with respect to ((~~his or her~~)) the threatened person's physical or mental health or safety; and

(b) ((~~The person by words or conduct places the person threatened in reasonable fear that the threat will be carried out. "Words or conduct" includes, in addition to any other form of communication or conduct, the sending of an electronic communication~~)) With respect to any offense committed under the circumstances identified in (a) of this subsection:

(i) Would cause a reasonable person to suffer emotional distress or to fear for the safety of the person threatened; or

(ii) Reasonably caused the threatened person to suffer emotional distress or fear for the threatened person's safety.

(2)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, a person who harasses another is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

(b) A person who harasses another is guilty of a class C felony if any of the following apply: (i) The person has previously been convicted in this or any other state of any crime of harassment, as defined in RCW 9A.46.060, of the same victim or members of the victim's family or household or any person specifically named in a no-contact or no-harassment order; (ii) the person harasses another person under subsection (1)(a)((~~(i)~~)) (ii) of this section by threatening to kill the person threatened or any other person; (iii) the person harasses a criminal justice participant or election official who is performing ((~~his or her~~)) official duties at the time the threat is made; or (iv) the person harasses a criminal justice participant or election official because of an action taken or decision made by the criminal justice participant or election official during the performance of ((~~his or her~~)) official duties. For the purposes of (b)(iii) and (iv) of this subsection, the fear from the threat must be a fear that a reasonable criminal justice participant or election official would have under all the circumstances. Threatening words do not constitute harassment if it is apparent to the criminal justice participant or election official that the person does not have the present and future ability to carry out the threat.

(3) Any criminal justice participant or election official who is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under subsection (2)(b)(iii) or (iv) of this section, and any family members residing with him or her, shall be eligible for the address confidentiality program created under RCW 40.24.030.

(4) For purposes of this section, a criminal justice participant includes any (a) federal, state, or local law enforcement agency employee; (b) federal, state, or local prosecuting attorney or deputy prosecuting attorney; (c) staff member of any adult corrections institution or local adult detention facility; (d) staff member of any juvenile corrections institution or local juvenile detention facility; (e) community corrections officer, probation, or parole officer; (f) member of the indeterminate sentence review board; (g) advocate from a crime victim/witness program; or (h) defense attorney.

(5) For the purposes of this section, an election official includes any staff member of the office of the secretary of state or staff member of a county auditor's office, regardless of whether the member is employed on a temporary or part-time basis, whose duties relate to voter registration or the processing of votes as provided in Title 29A RCW.

(6) The penalties provided in this section for harassment do not preclude the victim from seeking any other remedy otherwise available under law.

**Sec.**  RCW 9A.90.120 and 2022 c 231 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A person is guilty of cyber harassment if the person, with intent to harass or intimidate any other person, and under circumstances not constituting ((~~telephone~~)) harassment, makes an electronic communication to that person or a third party and the communication:

(a)(i) Uses any lewd, lascivious, indecent, or obscene words, images, or language, or suggests the commission of any lewd or lascivious act;

(ii) ((~~Is made anonymously or repeatedly;~~

~~(iii)~~)) Contains a threat to inflict bodily injury immediately or in the future on the person threatened or to any other person; ((~~or~~

~~(iv)~~)) (iii) Contains a threat to damage, immediately or in the future, the property of the person threatened or of any other person;

(iv) Contains a threat to subject the person threatened or any other person to physical confinement or restraint; or

(v) Contains a threat to maliciously do any other act which is intended to substantially harm the person threatened or any other person with respect to the threatened person's physical or mental health or safety; and

(b) With respect to any offense committed under the circumstances identified in (a)((~~(iii) or (iv)~~)) of this subsection:

(i) Would cause a reasonable person((~~, with knowledge of the sender's history,~~)) to suffer emotional distress or to fear for the safety of the person threatened; or

(ii) Reasonably caused the threatened person to suffer emotional distress or fear for the threatened person's safety.

(2)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, cyber harassment is a gross misdemeanor.

(b) A person who commits cyber harassment is guilty of a class C felony if any of the following apply:

(i) The person has previously been convicted in this or any other state of any crime of harassment, as defined in RCW 9A.46.060, of the same victim or members of the victim's family or household or any person specifically named in a no-contact or no-harassment order;

(ii) The person cyber harasses another person under subsection (1)(a)((~~(iii)~~)) (ii) of this section by threatening to kill the person threatened or any other person;

(iii) The person cyber harasses a criminal justice participant or election official who is performing the participant's official duties or election official's official duties at the time the communication is made;

(iv) The person cyber harasses a criminal justice participant or election official because of an action taken or decision made by the criminal justice participant or election official during the performance of the participant's official duties or election official's official duties; or

(v) The person commits cyber harassment in violation of any protective order protecting the victim.

(3) Any criminal justice participant or election official who is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under subsection (2)(b)(iii) or (iv) of this section, and any family members residing with the participant or election official, shall be eligible for the address confidentiality program created under RCW 40.24.030.

(4) For purposes of this section, a criminal justice participant includes any:

(a) Federal, state, or municipal court judge;

(b) Federal, state, or municipal court staff;

(c) Federal, state, or local law enforcement agency employee;

(d) Federal, state, or local prosecuting attorney or deputy prosecuting attorney;

(e) Staff member of any adult corrections institution or local adult detention facility;

(f) Staff member of any juvenile corrections institution or local juvenile detention facility;

(g) Community corrections officer, probation officer, or parole officer;

(h) Member of the indeterminate sentence review board;

(i) Advocate from a crime victim/witness program; or

(j) Defense attorney.

(5) For the purposes of this section, an election official includes any staff member of the office of the secretary of state or staff member of a county auditor's office, regardless of whether the member is employed on a temporary or part-time basis, whose duties relate to voter registration or the processing of votes as provided in Title 29A RCW.

(6) The penalties provided in this section for cyber harassment do not preclude the victim from seeking any other remedy otherwise available under law.

(7) Any offense committed under this section may be deemed to have been committed either at the place from which the communication was made or at the place where the communication was received.

(8) For purposes of this section, "electronic communication" means the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. "Electronic communication" includes, but is not limited to, email, internet-based communications, pager service, and electronic text messaging.

**Sec.**  RCW 40.24.030 and 2022 c 231 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) An adult person, a parent or guardian acting on behalf of a minor, or a guardian acting on behalf of an incapacitated person, as defined in RCW 11.88.010, (b) any election official as ((~~described~~)) defined in RCW 9A.46.020 who is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.46.020(2)(b) (iii) or (iv) and any election official as defined in RCW 9A.90.120 who is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.90.120(2)(b) (iii) or (iv), and any family members residing with him or her, and (c) any criminal justice participant as defined in RCW 9A.46.020 who is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.46.020(2)(b) (iii) or (iv) and any criminal justice participant as defined in RCW 9A.90.120 who is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.90.120(2)(b) (iii) or (iv), and any family members residing with him or her, may apply to the secretary of state to have an address designated by the secretary of state serve as the person's address or the address of the minor or incapacitated person. The secretary of state shall approve an application if it is filed in the manner and on the form prescribed by the secretary of state and if it contains:

(i) A sworn statement, under penalty of perjury, by the applicant that the applicant has good reason to believe (A) that the applicant, or the minor or incapacitated person on whose behalf the application is made, is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or stalking and that the applicant fears for his or her safety or his or her children's safety, or the safety of the minor or incapacitated person on whose behalf the application is made; (B) that the applicant, as an election official as ((~~described~~)) defined in RCW 9A.46.020 is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.46.020(2)(b) (iii) or (iv) and any election official as defined in RCW 9A.90.120, is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.90.120(2)(b) (iii) or (iv); or (C) that the applicant, as a criminal justice participant as defined in RCW 9A.46.020, is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.46.020(2)(b) (iii) or (iv), or that the applicant, as a criminal justice participant as defined in RCW 9A.90.120 is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.90.120(2)(b) (iii) or (iv);

(ii) If applicable, a sworn statement, under penalty of perjury, by the applicant, that the applicant has reason to believe they are a victim of (A) domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking perpetrated by an employee of a law enforcement agency, or((~~;~~)) (B) threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.90.120(2)(b) (iii) or (iv) or 9A.46.020(2)(b) (iii) or (iv);

(iii) A designation of the secretary of state as agent for purposes of service of process and for the purpose of receipt of mail;

(iv) The residential address and any telephone number where the applicant can be contacted by the secretary of state, which shall not be disclosed because disclosure will increase the risk of (A) domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or stalking, or (B) threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.90.120(2)(b) (iii) or (iv) or 9A.46.020(2)(b) (iii) or (iv);

(v) The signature of the applicant and of any individual or representative of any office designated in writing under RCW 40.24.080 who assisted in the preparation of the application, and the date on which the applicant signed the application.

(2) Applications shall be filed with the office of the secretary of state.

(3) Upon filing a properly completed application, the secretary of state shall certify the applicant as a program participant. Applicants shall be certified for four years following the date of filing unless the certification is withdrawn or invalidated before that date. The secretary of state shall by rule establish a renewal procedure.

(4)(a) During the application process, the secretary of state shall provide each applicant a form to direct the department of licensing to change the address of registration for vehicles or vessels solely or jointly registered to the applicant and the address associated with the applicant's driver's license or identicard to the applicant's address as designated by the secretary of state upon certification in the program. The directive to the department of licensing is only valid if signed by the applicant. The directive may only include information required by the department of licensing to verify the applicant's identity and ownership information for vehicles and vessels. This information is limited to the:

(i) Applicant's full legal name;

(ii) Applicant's Washington driver's license or identicard number;

(iii) Applicant's date of birth;

(iv) Vehicle identification number and license plate number for each vehicle solely or jointly registered to the applicant; and

(v) Hull identification number or vessel document number and vessel decal number for each vessel solely or jointly registered to the applicant.

(b) Upon certification of the applicants, the secretary of state shall transmit completed and signed directives to the department of licensing.

(c) Within 30 days of receiving a completed and signed directive, the department of licensing shall update the applicant's address on registration and licensing records.

(d) Applicants are not required to sign the directive to the department of licensing to be certified as a program participant.

(5) A person who knowingly provides false or incorrect information upon making an application or falsely attests in an application that disclosure of the applicant's address would endanger (a) the applicant's safety or the safety of the applicant's children or the minor or incapacitated person on whose behalf the application is made, (b) the safety of any election official as described in RCW 9A.90.120 who is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.90.120(2)(b) (iii) or (iv), or (c) the safety of any criminal justice participant as defined in RCW 9A.46.020 who is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.46.020(2)(b) (iii) or (iv) or of any criminal justice participant as defined in RCW 9A.90.120 who is a target for threats or harassment prohibited under RCW 9A.90.120(2)(b) (iii) or (iv), or any family members residing with him or her, shall be punished under RCW 40.16.030 or other applicable statutes.

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