

CHAPTER 303

AN ACT concerning cyber-harassment, amending and supplementing P.L.2013, c.272, and making an appropriation.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 1 of P.L.2013, c.272 (C.2C:33-4.1) is amended as follows:

C.2C:33-4.1 Crime of cyber-harassment.

1. a. A person commits the crime of cyber-harassment if, while making one or more communications in an online capacity via any electronic device or through a social networking site and with the purpose to harass another, the person:

- (1) threatens to inflict injury or physical harm to any person or the property of any person;
- (2) knowingly sends, posts, comments, requests, suggests, or proposes any lewd, indecent, or obscene material to or about a person with the intent to emotionally harm a reasonable person or place a reasonable person in fear of physical or emotional harm to his person; or
- (3) threatens to commit any crime against the person or the person's property.

b. Cyber-harassment is a crime of the fourth degree, except that cyber harassment is a crime of the third degree if the person:

(1) is 21 years of age or older at the time of the offense and impersonates a minor for the purpose of cyber-harassing a minor;

(2) commits the offense against a public servant or any member of a public servant's family.

For purposes of this section, "public servant" means any person elected to public office or appointed to or employed by any public entity in this State, or any subdivision thereof, and shall include any person serving as a judicial officer, as defined in section 1 of P.L.1995, c.23 (C.47:1A-1.1), juror, advisor, or consultant performing a governmental function, but shall not include witnesses.

c. If a minor under the age of 16 is adjudicated delinquent for cyber-harassment, the court may order as a condition of the sentence that the minor, accompanied by a parent or guardian, complete, in a satisfactory manner, one or both of the following:

- (1) a class or training program intended to reduce the tendency toward cyber-harassment behavior; or
- (2) a class or training program intended to bring awareness to the dangers associated with cyber-harassment.

d. A parent or guardian who fails to comply with a condition imposed by the court pursuant to subsection c. of this section is a disorderly person and shall be fined not more than \$100 for a first offense and not more than \$500 for each subsequent offense.

e. The trier of fact may infer that a person acted with a purpose to harass another if the person knows or should have known that any of the person's actions constituting an offense under this section are knowingly directed to or are about a public servant, and there is a nexus between the offense and relates to the performance of the public servant's public duties.

f. In addition to any other disposition or condition imposed pursuant to this section, a parent or guardian having legal custody of a minor who demonstrates willful or wanton disregard in the exercise of the supervision and control of the conduct of a minor adjudicated delinquent of cyber-harassment pursuant to this section may be liable in a civil action pursuant to section 4 of P.L.2021, c.338 (C.2A:53A-17.1).

C.2C:33-4.2 Education, awareness of cyber-harassment, assistance to victims, promotion of prevention training, initiatives; public servants.

2. a. The Attorney General shall, through the Division of Violence Intervention and Victim Assistance in the Department of Law and Public Safety, undertake such steps as the Attorney

General deems appropriate to promote education and awareness of cyber-harassment, provide assistance to victims of cyber-harassment crimes, and promote initiatives and training throughout the State to prevent cyber-harassment, specifically against public servants and their family members.

b. In furtherance of the goals set forth in subsection a. of this section, the Attorney General shall, at a minimum, conduct or effectuate the following tasks:

(1) regularly engage with law enforcement, legal professionals, and technology professionals to clearly and comprehensively define cyber-harassment within the context of cyber-harassment crime, as it evolves due to emerging technologies;

(2) establish user-friendly and accessible reporting systems to enable cyber-harassment victims to easily report cyber-harassment offenses and seek assistance from relevant authorities;

(3) implement educational programs, directed towards both potential cyber-harassment offenders and victims, in order to raise awareness about cyber-harassment and its consequences;

(4) collaborate with social media platforms to develop stricter policies to identify and remove harassing content;

(5) encourage social media platforms to implement reporting features and provide support to victims to help create a safer online environment;

(6) provide support services, counseling, and legal aid to victims of cyber-harassment to help them cope with the emotional and psychological impact of such harassment;

(7) coordinate with the Department of Education to offer cyber ethics classes in New Jersey schools that help to promote responsible online behavior and create a culture of respect and empathy online;

(8) coordinate with State and local law enforcement agencies to establish or expand specialized units within law enforcement agencies that are dedicated to handling cyber-harassment crimes; and

(9) coordinate with State and local law enforcement agencies to enhance comprehensive training programs for law enforcement personnel on cyber-harassment investigation techniques, digital evidence collection, and law enforcement procedures specific to cyber-harassment cases.

c. The Attorney General may apply for and accept on behalf of the State any grants from the federal government or any agency thereof, or from any foundation, corporation, association, or person, and may comply with the terms, conditions, and limitations thereof, for any of the purposes of this section. Any money received may be expended by the Division of Violence Intervention and Victims Assistance, subject to any limitations imposed in the grants, to effectuate any of the purposes of this section upon certification by the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the Department of the Treasury.

3. The Attorney General, pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), shall adopt rules and regulations necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

4. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Law and Public Safety such funds as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act, as certified by the Attorney General and subject to the approval of the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the Department of the Treasury.

5. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 20, 2026.