S-0019.2

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**SENATE BILL 5495**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Zeiger, Nguyen, Padden, and Frockt

AN ACT Relating to social media extortion and relief; reenacting and amending RCW 9A.04.110; adding a new section to chapter 9A.56 RCW; creating a new section; and prescribing penalties.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 9A.56 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A person is guilty of social media extortion if he or she commits extortion by means of a threat as defined in RCW 9A.04.110(28)(k).

(2) Social media extortion is a class C felony punishable according to chapter 9A.20 RCW.

**Sec.**  RCW 9A.04.110 and 2011 c 336 s 350 and 2011 c 166 s 2 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

In this title unless a different meaning plainly is required:

(1) "Acted" includes, where relevant, omitted to act;

(2) "Actor" includes, where relevant, a person failing to act;

(3) "Benefit" is any gain or advantage to the beneficiary, including any gain or advantage to a third person pursuant to the desire or consent of the beneficiary;

(4)(a) "Bodily injury," "physical injury," or "bodily harm" means physical pain or injury, illness, or an impairment of physical condition;

(b) "Substantial bodily harm" means bodily injury which involves a temporary but substantial disfigurement, or which causes a temporary but substantial loss or impairment of the function of any bodily part or organ, or which causes a fracture of any bodily part;

(c) "Great bodily harm" means bodily injury which creates a probability of death, or which causes significant serious permanent disfigurement, or which causes a significant permanent loss or impairment of the function of any bodily part or organ;

(5) "Building," in addition to its ordinary meaning, includes any dwelling, fenced area, vehicle, railway car, cargo container, or any other structure used for lodging of persons or for carrying on business therein, or for the use, sale, or deposit of goods; each unit of a building consisting of two or more units separately secured or occupied is a separate building;

(6) "Deadly weapon" means any explosive or loaded or unloaded firearm, and shall include any other weapon, device, instrument, article, or substance, including a "vehicle" as defined in this section, which, under the circumstances in which it is used, attempted to be used, or threatened to be used, is readily capable of causing death or substantial bodily harm;

(7) "Dwelling" means any building or structure, though movable or temporary, or a portion thereof, which is used or ordinarily used by a person for lodging;

(8) "Government" includes any branch, subdivision, or agency of the government of this state and any county, city, district, or other local governmental unit;

(9) "Governmental function" includes any activity which a public servant is legally authorized or permitted to undertake on behalf of a government;

(10) "Indicted" and "indictment" include "informed against" and "information", and "informed against" and "information" include "indicted" and "indictment";

(11) "Judge" includes every judicial officer authorized alone or with others, to hold or preside over a court;

(12) "Malice" and "maliciously" shall import an evil intent, wish, or design to vex, annoy, or injure another person. Malice may be inferred from an act done in willful disregard of the rights of another, or an act wrongfully done without just cause or excuse, or an act or omission of duty betraying a willful disregard of social duty;

(13) "Officer" and "public officer" means a person holding office under a city, county, or state government, or the federal government who performs a public function and in so doing is vested with the exercise of some sovereign power of government, and includes all assistants, deputies, clerks, and employees of any public officer and all persons lawfully exercising or assuming to exercise any of the powers or functions of a public officer;

(14) "Omission" means a failure to act;

(15) "Peace officer" means a duly appointed city, county, or state law enforcement officer;

(16) "Pecuniary benefit" means any gain or advantage in the form of money, property, commercial interest, or anything else the primary significance of which is economic gain;

(17) "Person," "he or she," and "actor" include any natural person and, where relevant, a corporation, joint stock association, or an unincorporated association;

(18) "Place of work" includes but is not limited to all the lands and other real property of a farm or ranch in the case of an actor who owns, operates, or is employed to work on such a farm or ranch;

(19) "Prison" means any place designated by law for the keeping of persons held in custody under process of law, or under lawful arrest, including but not limited to any state correctional institution or any county or city jail;

(20) "Prisoner" includes any person held in custody under process of law, or under lawful arrest;

(21) "Projectile stun gun" means an electronic device that projects wired probes attached to the device that emit an electrical charge and that is designed and primarily employed to incapacitate a person or animal;

(22) "Property" means anything of value, whether tangible or intangible, real or personal;

(23) "Public servant" means any person other than a witness who presently occupies the position of or has been elected, appointed, or designated to become any officer or employee of government, including a legislator, judge, judicial officer, juror, and any person participating as an advisor, consultant, or otherwise in performing a governmental function;

(24) "Signature" includes any memorandum, mark, or sign made with intent to authenticate any instrument or writing, or the subscription of any person thereto;

(25) "Statute" means the Constitution or an act of the legislature or initiative or referendum of this state;

(26) "Strangulation" means to compress a person's neck, thereby obstructing the person's blood flow or ability to breathe, or doing so with the intent to obstruct the person's blood flow or ability to breathe;

(27) "Suffocation" means to block or impair a person's intake of air at the nose and mouth, whether by smothering or other means, with the intent to obstruct the person's ability to breathe;

(28) "Threat" means to communicate, directly or indirectly the intent:

(a) To cause bodily injury in the future to the person threatened or to any other person; or

(b) To cause physical damage to the property of a person other than the actor; or

(c) To subject the person threatened or any other person to physical confinement or restraint; or

(d) To accuse any person of a crime or cause criminal charges to be instituted against any person; or

(e) To expose a secret or publicize an asserted fact, whether true or false, tending to subject any person to hatred, contempt, or ridicule; or

(f) To reveal any information sought to be concealed by the person threatened; or

(g) To testify or provide information or withhold testimony or information with respect to another's legal claim or defense; or

(h) To take wrongful action as an official against anyone or anything, or wrongfully withhold official action, or cause such action or withholding; or

(i) To bring about or continue a strike, boycott, or other similar collective action to obtain property which is not demanded or received for the benefit of the group which the actor purports to represent; or

(j) To do any other act which is intended to harm substantially the person threatened or another with respect to his or her health, safety, business, financial condition, or personal relationships; or

(k) To obtain property from any person in return for removing negative social media communications about that person or person's health, safety, business, financial condition, or personal relationships, or to post future negative social media communications about a person or the person's health, safety, business, financial condition, or personal relationships if that person does not provide the property demanded. There is a rebuttable presumption that the negative social media communications are untrue where a person demands property in return for removing the communications or in return for not posting future negative social media communications;

(29) "Vehicle" means a "motor vehicle" as defined in the vehicle and traffic laws, any aircraft, or any vessel equipped for propulsion by mechanical means or by sail;

(30) Words in the present tense shall include the future tense; and in the masculine shall include the feminine and neuter genders; and in the singular shall include the plural; and in the plural shall include the singular.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) A social media provider must remove negative social media communications specifically identified within a copy of a police report filed with law enforcement within twenty-four hours after being presented a copy of a police report that alleges social media extortion, and a copy of the threat as defined under RCW 9A.04.110(28)(k).

(2) For purposes of this section, "social media provider" means web sites and applications that enable users to create and share content, and find and connect with other users of common interests.

(3) A person may seek relief in court to require a social media provider to remove negative social media communications as required under subsection (1) of this section. Venue for such actions is the county where the petitioner resides.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to impose liability on an interactive computer service, as defined in 47 U.S.C. Sec. 230(f)(2) as it exists on the effective date of this section, for content provided by another person.

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