

RCW 9A.46.020 Definition—Penalties. (1) A person is guilty of harassment if:

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

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

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

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

(iv) Maliciously to do any other act which is intended to substantially harm the person threatened or another with respect to his or her physical 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.

(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) 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 person 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. [2024 c 292 s 1; 2023 c 102 s 16; 2011 c 64 s 1; 2003 c 53 s 69; 1999 c 27 s 2; 1997 c 105 s 1; 1992 c 186 s 2; 1985 c 288 s 2.]

Effective date—2024 c 292: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 26, 2024]." [2024 c 292 s 3.]

Intent—Effective date—2003 c 53: See notes following RCW 2.48.180.

Intent—1999 c 27: "It is the intent of chapter 27, Laws of 1999 to clarify that electronic communications are included in the types of conduct and actions that can constitute the crimes of harassment and stalking. It is not the intent of the legislature, by adoption of chapter 27, Laws of 1999, to restrict in any way the types of conduct or actions that can constitute harassment or stalking." [1999 c 27 s 1.]

Severability—1992 c 186: See note following RCW 9A.46.110.