

Alaska State Legislature



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House Passes Electronic Harassment Bill **Email Added to Forms of Threatening Behavior**

(JUNEAU) – The Alaska House of Representatives passed [House Bill 12](#) by a vote of 37 to zero today. Sponsored by Rep. Kevin Meyer (R-Anchorage), HB 12 adds obscene email and email that threatens physical injury or sexual contact to the legal definition of harassment.

“What we’re trying to do with this bill is capture those who are currently falling through the cracks,” Rep. Meyer said.

Currently the law only considers communication in person or by telephone as forms of harassment. By including electronic communication as a form of harassment, HB 12 addresses a problem that has expanded with technology.

“What we’re finding is that some people might be uncomfortable facing their victim on a face to face basis or even talking to them on the telephone but they may be very comfortable sitting behind a keyboard and even programming their computer to send these harassing emails every hour or every minute 24 hours a day, seven days week,” Meyer said. “It’s just another form of harassment that’s evolved as we’ve evolved with electronic communication and unfortunately there’s no way to prosecute these people currently.”

Harassment is a misdemeanor; however, Meyer says catching people guilty of harassment can prevent more violent offenses later.

“Often harassment is a prelude to something more serious, a more violent crime,” Meyer said “This is a very serious thing for our law enforcement folks and they do want to prosecute it before it becomes something more serious and there is no way for them to do it right now so it’s very frustrating for them.”

HB 12 moves to the Senate.

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