

Alaska State Legislature



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 1, 2003

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Governor Signs Electronic Harassment Bill Now Email Is Also a Form of Threatening Behavior

(JUNEAU) – Governor Frank Murkowski signed House Bill 12 into law on Thursday. Sponsored by Representative Kevin Meyer (R-Anchorage), HB 12 adds obscene email and email that threatens physical injury or sexual contact to the legal definition of harassment.

“Now, those who have slipped by the law on a technicality in the past will now be held accountable for their actions,” Meyer said.

Until now, the law only considered communication in person or by telephone as forms of harassment. By including electronic communication as a form of harassment, now the law addresses a problem that has expanded with technology.

“This law cracks down on the offenders who have trouble speaking to their victims face to face but have no problem sitting at their keyboard and sending harassing message after harassing message,” Meyer said.

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

“Often harassment is a prelude to something more serious, a more violent crime,” Meyer said “This has been a challenge for our law enforcement folks, and, now they can prosecute it before it becomes something more serious.”

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