

HB 1532 -- House of Worship Act

Sponsor: Schoeller

This bill establishes the House of Worship Act which specifies that a person commits the crime of disrupting a house of worship if he or she knowingly disturbs, interrupts, or disquiets any house of worship by using profane discourse, rude or indecent behavior, or making unreasonable noise either within the house or so near it as to disturb the order and solemnity of the worship services; intentionally injures, intimidates, or interferes with or attempts to injure, intimidate, or interfere with any person lawfully exercising the right of religious freedom in or outside of a house of worship; or seeks access to a house of worship by force, threat, or physical destruction. Disrupting a house of worship is a class C misdemeanor for a first offense, a class B misdemeanor for a second offense, and a class A misdemeanor for any third or subsequent offense. "House of worship" means any church, synagogue, other building or structure, or public or private place used for religious worship, religious instruction, or other religious purpose.

The bill allows any person aggrieved by the crime of disrupting a house of worship or the crime of institutional vandalism to commence a civil action for appropriate relief including, but not limited to, injunctive relief, compensatory and punitive damages, and costs and reasonable attorney fees.