

STATE OF NEW YORK

10217

IN ASSEMBLY

May 6, 2022

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Otis) --
read once and referred to the Committee on Science and Technology

AN ACT to amend the penal law, in relation to establishing the crime of aggravated harassment by means of electronic or digital communication; and to amend the civil rights law, in relation to providing for a private right of action for the unlawful dissemination or publication of deep fakes

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The penal law is amended by adding a new section 240.78 to
2 read as follows:

3 § 240.78 Aggravated harassment by means of electronic or digital commu-
4 nication.

5 1. A person is guilty of aggravated harassment by means of electronic
6 or digital communication when, with the intent to harass, annoy, threat-
7 en or alarm another person, he or she produces, distributes, publishes
8 or broadcasts material that contains a picture, photograph or image of a
9 person or persons or a deep fake into which the image of another person
10 or persons is superimposed as a deep fake.

11 2. For purposes of this section, "deep fake" means a digitized image
12 that is altered to incorporate a person's face or their identifiable
13 body part onto such image, and such image is any printed material,
14 advertisement, movie, video, communication or computer image that
15 depicts a pornographic or lewd sex act as defined pursuant to section
16 245.00 or 130.00 of this chapter, or graphic violence, that is published
17 without the explicit written permission of the individual or individuals
18 depicted, and for no other legitimate purpose other than to harass,
19 annoy, threaten or alarm another person.

20 Aggravated harassment by means of electronic or digital communication
21 shall be a class E felony.

22 § 2. Section 52-b of the civil rights law, as added by chapter 109 of
23 the laws of 2019, is amended to read as follows:

24 § 52-b. Private right of action for unlawful dissemination or publica-
25 tion of an intimate image or deep fake. 1. Any person depicted in a

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 still or video image, regardless of whether or not the original still or
2 video image was consensually obtained, shall have a cause of action
3 against an individual who, for the purpose of harassing, annoying or
4 alarming such person, disseminated or published, or threatened to
5 disseminate or publish, such still or video image, where such image or
6 deep fake:

7 a. was a deep fake or was taken when such person had a reasonable
8 expectation that ~~the~~ their image would remain private; and

9 b. depicts (i) an unclothed or exposed intimate part of such person;
10 or (ii) such person engaging in sexual conduct, as defined in subdivi-
11 sion ten of section 130.00 of the penal law, with another person; and

12 c. was disseminated or published, or threatened to be disseminated or
13 published, without the consent of such person.

14 2. In any action commenced pursuant to subdivision one of this
15 section, the finder of fact, in its discretion, may award injunctive
16 relief, punitive damages, compensatory damages and reasonable court
17 costs and attorney's fees.

18 3. This section shall not apply to the following:

19 a. the reporting of unlawful conduct;

20 b. dissemination or publication of an intimate still ~~[or]~~, video image
21 or deep fake made during lawful and common practices of law enforcement,
22 legal proceedings or medical treatment;

23 c. images involving voluntary exposure in a public or commercial
24 setting; or

25 d. dissemination or publication of an intimate still ~~[or]~~, video image
26 or deep fake made for a legitimate public purpose.

27 4. Any person depicted in a still or video image or deep fake that
28 depicts an unclothed or exposed intimate part of such person, or such
29 person engaging in sexual conduct as defined in subdivision ten of
30 section 130.00 of the penal law with another person, which is dissem-
31 inated or published without the consent of such person and where such
32 person had a reasonable expectation that the image would remain private,
33 may maintain an action or special proceeding for a court order to
34 require any website that is subject to personal jurisdiction under
35 subdivision five of this section to permanently remove such still ~~[or]~~,
36 video image or deep fake; any such court order granted pursuant to this
37 subdivision may direct removal only as to images that are reasonably
38 within such website's control.

39 5. a. Any website that hosts or transmits a still or video image or
40 deep fake, viewable in this state, taken or produced under circumstances
41 where the person depicted had a reasonable expectation that the image
42 would remain private, which depicts:

43 (i) an unclothed or exposed intimate part, as defined in section
44 245.15 of the penal law, of a resident of this state; or

45 (ii) a resident of this state engaging in sexual conduct as defined in
46 subdivision ten of section 130.00 of the penal law with another person;
47 and

48 b. Such still ~~[or]~~, video image or deep fake is hosted or transmitted
49 without the consent of such resident of this state, shall be subject to
50 personal jurisdiction in a civil action in this state to the maximum
51 extent permitted under the United States constitution and federal law.

52 6. A cause of action or special proceeding under this section shall be
53 commenced the later of either:

54 a. three years after the dissemination or publication of an image; or

55 b. one year from the date a person discovers, or reasonably should
56 have discovered, the dissemination or publication of such image.

1 6-a. For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the
2 following meanings:

3 a. "Individual" means a person, corporation, business entity, firm,
4 association, committee or organization conducting business within the
5 state of New York.

6 b. "Deep fake" means a digitized image that is altered to incorporate
7 a person's face or their identifiable body part onto such image, and
8 such image is any printed material, advertisement, movie, video, commu-
9 nication or computer image that depicts a pornographic or lewd sex act
10 as defined pursuant to section 245.00 or 130.00 of the penal law, or
11 graphic violence, that is published without the explicit written permis-
12 sion of the individual or individuals depicted, and for no other legiti-
13 mate purpose other than to harass, annoy, threaten or alarm another
14 person.

15 7. Nothing herein shall be read to require a prior criminal complaint,
16 prosecution or conviction to establish the elements of the cause of
17 action provided for by this section.

18 8. The provisions of this section are in addition to, but shall not
19 supersede, any other rights or remedies available in law or equity.

20 9. If any provision of this section or its application to any person
21 or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other
22 provisions or applications of this section which can be given effect
23 without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the
24 provisions of this section are severable.

25 10. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit, or to
26 enlarge, the protections that 47 U.S.C § 230 confers on an interactive
27 computer service for content provided by another information content
28 provider, as such terms are defined in 47 U.S.C. § 230.

29 § 3. Section 52-c of the civil rights law, as added by chapter 304 of
30 the laws of 2020, is amended to read as follows:

31 § 52-c. Private right of action for unlawful dissemination or publica-
32 tion of a sexually explicit depiction or deep fake of an individual. 1.
33 For the purposes of this section:

34 a. "depicted individual" means an individual who appears, as a result
35 of digitization, to be giving a performance they did not actually
36 perform or to be performing in a performance that was actually performed
37 by the depicted individual but was subsequently altered to be in
38 violation of this section.

39 b. "digitization" means to realistically depict the nude body parts of
40 another human being as the nude body parts of the depicted individual,
41 computer-generated nude body parts as the nude body parts of the
42 depicted individual or the depicted individual engaging in sexual
43 conduct, as defined in subdivision ten of section 130.00 of the penal
44 law, in which the depicted individual did not engage.

45 c. "individual" means a natural person.

46 d. "person" means a human being or legal entity.

47 e. "sexually explicit material" means any portion of an audio visual
48 work, or deep fake, that shows the depicted individual performing in the
49 nude, meaning with an unclothed or exposed intimate part, as defined in
50 section 245.15 of the penal law, or appearing to engage in, or being
51 subjected to, sexual conduct, as defined in subdivision ten of section
52 130.00 of the penal law.

53 f. "deep fake" means a digitized image that is altered to incorporate
54 an individual's face or their identifiable body part onto such image,
55 and such image is any printed material, advertisement, movie, video,
56 communication or computer image that depicts a pornographic or lewd sex

1 act as defined pursuant to section 245.00 or 130.00 of the penal law, or
2 graphic violence, that is published without the explicit written permis-
3 sion of the individual or individuals depicted, and for no other legiti-
4 mate purpose other than to harass, annoy, threaten or alarm another
5 person.

6 2. a. A depicted individual shall have a cause of action against a
7 person who, discloses, disseminates, produces or publishes sexually
8 explicit material or a deep fake related to the depicted individual, and
9 the person knows or reasonably should have known the depicted individual
10 in that material did not consent to its creation, disclosure, dissem-
11 ination, production or publication.

12 b. It shall not be a defense to an action under this section that
13 there is a disclaimer in the sexually explicit material that communi-
14 cates that the inclusion of the depicted individual in the sexually
15 explicit material was unauthorized or that the depicted individual did
16 not participate in the creation or development of the material.

17 3. a. A depicted individual may only consent to the creation, disclo-
18 sure, dissemination, production, or publication of sexually explicit
19 material or a deep fake by knowingly and voluntarily signing an agree-
20 ment written in plain language that includes a general description of
21 the sexually explicit material and the audiovisual work in which it will
22 be incorporated.

23 b. A depicted individual may rescind consent by delivering written
24 notice within three business days from the date consent was given to the
25 person in whose favor consent was made, unless one of the following
26 requirements is satisfied:

27 i. the depicted individual is given at least three business days to
28 review the terms of the agreement before signing it; or

29 ii. if the depicted individual is represented, the attorney, talent
30 agent, or personal manager authorized to represent the depicted individ-
31 ual provides additional written approval of the signed agreement.

32 4. a. A person is not liable under this section if:

33 i. the person discloses, disseminates or publishes the sexually
34 explicit material in the course of reporting unlawful activity, exercis-
35 ing the person's law enforcement duties, or hearings, trials or other
36 legal proceedings; or

37 ii. the sexually explicit material is a matter of legitimate public
38 concern, a work of political or newsworthy value or similar work, or
39 commentary, criticism or disclosure that is otherwise protected by the
40 constitution of this state or the United States; provided that sexually
41 explicit material shall not be considered of newsworthy value solely
42 because the depicted individual is a public figure.

43 5. In any action commenced pursuant to this section, the finder of
44 fact, in its discretion, may award injunctive relief, punitive damages,
45 compensatory damages, and reasonable court costs and attorney's fees.

46 6. A cause of action or special proceeding under this section shall be
47 commenced the later of either:

48 a. three years after the dissemination or publication of sexually
49 explicit material; or

50 b. one year from the date a person discovers, or reasonably should
51 have discovered, the dissemination or publication of such sexually
52 explicit material.

53 7. Nothing in this section shall be read to require a prior criminal
54 complaint, prosecution or conviction to establish the elements of the
55 cause of action provided for in this section.

1 8. The provisions of this section including the remedies are in addi-
2 tion to, and shall not supersede, any other rights or remedies available
3 in law or equity.

4 9. If any provision of this section or its application to any person
5 or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other
6 provisions or applications of this section which can be given effect
7 without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the
8 provisions of this section are severable.

9 10. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit, or to
10 enlarge, the protections that 47 U.S.C. § 230 confers on an interactive
11 computer service for content provided by another information content
12 provider, as such terms are defined in 47 U.S.C. § 230.

13 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.