STATE OF NEW YORK

7211

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

June 7, 2021

Introduced by Sens. SAVINO, GRIFFO -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the penal law, in relation to creating the certain offenses and provisions related to the unlawful dissemination of a personal image; and to amend the civil rights law, in relation to creating a private right of action for such offenses

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

Section 1. The penal law is amended by adding three new sections 250.70, 250.71, and 250.72 to read as follows:

§ 250.70 Unlawful dissemination of a personal image; definitions, application.

1. The following definitions shall apply to sections 250.71 and 250.72 of this article:

(a) "broadcast" means electronically transmitting a visual image with the intent that it be viewed by a person;

(b) "disseminate" means to give, provide, lend, deliver, mail, send, forward, transfer or transmit, electronically or otherwise to another person;

(c) "publish" means to: (i) disseminate, as defined in paragraph (b) of this subdivision, with the intent that such image or images be disseminated to ten or more persons; (ii) disseminate with the intent that such images be sold by another person; (iii) post, present, display, exhibit, circulate, advertise or allows access, electronically or otherwise, so as to make an image or images available to the public; or (iv) disseminate with the intent that an image or images be posted, presented, displayed, exhibited, circulated, advertised or made accessible, electronically or otherwise and to make such image or images available to the public.

2. The following provisions shall apply to sections 250.71 and 250.72 of this article:

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

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(a) The provisions of these sections shall not apply to the following:

(i) the reporting of unlawful conduct;

(ii) the dissemination or publication of an image made during lawful and common practices of law enforcement, legal proceedings or medical treatment;

(iii) images involving activities in a public setting or activities in a commercial setting in which legal activities are being conducted; or

(iv) the dissemination or publication of an image made for a legitimate public purpose.

(b) Nothing in these sections shall be construed to limit, or to enlarge, the protections that 47 U.S.C. § 230 confers on an interactive computer service for content provided by another information content provider, as such terms are defined in 47 U.S.C. § 230.

3. With respect to sections 250.71 and 250.72 of this article, the provisions of subdivision two of section 235.15 and subdivisions one and two of section 235.24 of this part shall apply.

§ 250.71 Unlawful dissemination of a personal image in the second degree.

A person is guilty of unlawful dissemination of a personal image in the second degree when, with the intent of degrading or abusing a person who has been the victim of a crime described in title H of this part, or otherwise causing harm to the emotional, financial or physical welfare of such victim or such victim's family, or for the actor's own or another person's amusement, entertainment or profit, the actor intentionally:

1. (a) creates and disseminates or publishes a still or video image of such victim, without the victim's consent, in a manner that has no or minimal cultural or social value; and

(b) the victim is identifiable from the still or video image itself or from information displayed in connection with the still or video image; and

(c) the image depicts the commission of the crime against the victim or physical injury suffered by the victim as a result of the commission of the crime; or

2. acting as an agent of the actor who created an image in violation of subdivision one of this section, he or she knowingly disseminates or publishes such image.

Unlawful dissemination of a personal image in the second degree is a class B misdemeanor.

§ 250.72 Unlawful dissemination of a personal image in the first degree.

A person is guilty of unlawful dissemination of a personal image in the first degree when he or she commits the offense of unlawful dissemination of a personal image in the second degree and:

1. he or she committed, participated in the commission of, or conspired to commit the crime that resulted in such injury to such victim; or

2. the victim suffered serious physical injury or death which is depicted in the unlawfully disseminated image.

Unlawful dissemination of a personal image in the first degree is a class A misdemeanor.

§ 2. The civil rights law is amended by adding a new section 52-d to read as follows:

§ 52-d. Private right of action for unlawful dissemination or publication of a personal image. 1. Any crime victim depicted in a still or video image which was unlawfully disseminated as provided in section 250.71 or 250.72 of the penal law shall have a cause of action against

such individual who disseminated or published such still or video image without the consent of the person depicted in the image.

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

3. This section shall not apply to the following:

a. the reporting of unlawful conduct;

b. the dissemination or publication of an image made during law enforcement activities, legal proceedings or medical treatment;

c. images involving activities in a public setting or activities in a commercial setting in which legal activities are being conducted; or

d. the dissemination or publication of an image made for a legitimate public purpose.

4. Any such crime victim depicted in a still or video image which was unlawfully disseminated as provided in section 250.71 or 250.72 of the penal law, or such person's estate, may maintain an action or special proceeding for a court order to require any website that is subject to personal jurisdiction under subdivision five of this section to permanently remove such still or video image; any such court order granted pursuant to this subdivision may direct removal only as to images that are reasonably within such website's control.

5. Any website that hosts or transmits a still or video image, viewable in this state, which was unlawfully disseminated as provided in section 250.71 or 250.72 of the penal law and which image is hosted or transmitted without the consent of the person depicted in the image, shall be subject to personal jurisdiction in a civil action in this state to the maximum extent permitted under the United States constitution and federal law.

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

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

b. one year from the date the plaintiff or petitioners discovered, or reasonably should have discovered, such dissemination or publication of such image.

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

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

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

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

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall have become a law.