

STATE OF NEW YORK

10785

IN ASSEMBLY

April 1, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. NORBER, CHANG, BROOK-KRASNY, NOVAKHOV -- read once and referred to the Committee on Codes

AN ACT to amend the penal law, in relation to the crimes of disruption or disturbance of a religious service, funeral, burial or memorial service in the first and second degrees

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

1 Section 1. Section 240.00 of the penal law is amended by adding a new
2 subdivision 8 to read as follows:

3 8. "Place of religious worship" means any building, structure, or
4 portion thereof, that is regularly used by a religious corporation, as
5 incorporated under the religious corporations law or the education law,
6 for purposes of conducting religious services, ceremonies, or other
7 forms of religious observance or prayer.

8 § 2. Section 240.21 of the penal law, as amended by chapter 566 of the
9 laws of 2008, the opening paragraph as amended by chapter 528 of the
10 laws of 2011, is amended to read as follows:

11 § 240.21 Disruption or disturbance of a religious service, funeral,
12 burial or memorial service in the second degree.

13 A person is guilty of disruption or disturbance of a religious
14 service, funeral, burial or memorial service in the second degree when
15 ~~[he or she]~~ such person makes unreasonable noise or disturbance while at
16 a lawfully assembled religious service, funeral, burial or memorial
17 service, or within ~~[three]~~ five hundred feet thereof, with intent to
18 cause annoyance or alarm or recklessly creating a risk thereof.

19 Disruption or disturbance of a religious service, funeral, burial or
20 memorial service in the second degree is a class A misdemeanor.

21 § 3. The penal law is amended by adding a new section 240.22 to read
22 as follows:

23 § 240.22 Disruption or disturbance of a religious service, funeral,
24 burial or memorial service in the first degree.

25 A person is guilty of disruption or disturbance of a religious
26 service, funeral, burial or memorial service in the first degree when
27 such person makes unreasonable noise or disturbance while at a lawfully

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

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1 assembled religious service, funeral, burial or memorial service, or
2 within five hundred feet thereof, with intent to cause annoyance or
3 alarm or recklessly creating a risk thereof, and

4 1. Interferes with access to a place of religious worship thereby
5 preventing another person from exercising the right of religious freedom
6 therein; or

7 2. Is part of a group or groups of two or more people demonstrating or
8 preparing to demonstrate outside of a place of religious worship,
9 including its parking lot entrances, driveways, driveway entrances, and
10 any other public way that comes in contact with such facilities.

11 Disruption or disturbance of a religious service, funeral, burial or
12 memorial service in the first degree is a class E felony.

13 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.