

HB363 INTRODUCED



1 HB363
2 ARWFKSQ-1
3 By Representatives Barnes, Kiel, Wilcox, Moore (P), Myrex,
4 Harrison, Rehm, Marques, Brown, Smith, Crow, Brinyark,
5 Kirkland, Treadaway, Bedsole, Butler, Crawford, Rigsby,
6 Colvin, Shaver, Albright, Lipscomb, Hurst, Hulsey, Shaw,
7 Baker, Simpson, Shirey, Lamb, Gidley, Givens, Fidler, Ross,
8 Clouse, Lee, Paramore, Yarbrough, Carns, Robbins, Standridge,
9 Bolton, Fincher, Starnes, Mooney, Paschal, Hammett, Lomax,
10 Oliver, Stringer, Pettus, Faulkner, Underwood, DuBose,
11 Pringle, Whitt
12 RFD: Public Safety and Homeland Security
13 First Read: 29-Jan-26



1
2
3

4 SYNOPSIS:

5 Under existing law, there is established the
6 crimes of riot, harassment, and disorderly conduct.

7 This bill would provide that if an individual
8 enters upon the premises of a church building to
9 intentionally disrupt a worship service by engaging in
10 a riot, unlawful protest, or disorderly conduct, or
11 otherwise engages in the harassment of any other
12 individual in the worship service, the individual would
13 be guilty of the offense of disruption of a worship
14 service.

15 This bill would also provide that if an
16 individual enters upon church property contiguous to
17 where a church worship service is being held with the
18 intent on obstructing the ingress or egress to the
19 property, and obstructs the ingress or egress to the
20 property, the individual would also be guilty of the
21 offense.

22
23

24 A BILL

25 TO BE ENTITLED

26 AN ACT

27
28

Relating to crimes; to provide legislative findings; to

HB363 INTRODUCED



29 establish the crime of disruption of a worship service; and to
30 provide criminal penalties for a violation.

31 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

32 Section 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares the
33 following:

34 (1) The right of the people to meet and assemble for
35 religious worship is imperative for the people of this state.

36 (2) The Constitution of Alabama of 2022, guarantees the
37 free exercise of religion and prohibits the government from
38 burdening that free exercise by state or local law.

39 (3) The prohibition in the Constitution of Alabama of
40 2022, against laws burdening the free exercise of religion
41 naturally contemplates laws protecting the exercise of
42 religion.

43 (4) The right to engage in a peaceful protest is
44 essential to a free society of people, and the right
45 unambiguously extends to public forums traditionally open to
46 political speech and debate, including public streets,
47 sidewalks, and parks; however, the right has never been
48 interpreted to authorize the trespass and disruption of
49 private property used for legitimate, constitutionally
50 protected purposes.

51 (5) The exercise of the right of an individual to
52 protest at places of worship must be balanced against the
53 right of another individual to meet and assemble for religious
54 worship in an unobstructed manner.

55 (6) Prevention of the willful disruption of religious
56 worship services is a matter of statewide concern.



HB363 INTRODUCED

57 (7) It is a compelling public interest of this state to
58 protect the ability of its people to meet and assemble for
59 religious worship without willful disruption.

60 (b) As used in this section, the following terms have
61 the following meanings:

62 (1) CHURCH. A bona fide duly constituted religious
63 society or ecclesiastical body of any sect, order, or
64 denomination, or any congregation thereof. The terms includes
65 any church building, mosque, synagogue, or other religious
66 real property.

67 (2) DISORDERLY CONDUCT. The crime of disorderly conduct
68 pursuant to Section 13A-11-7, Code of Alabama 1975.

71 (4) RIOT. The crime of riot pursuant to Section
72 13A-11-3, Code of Alabama 1975.

73 (5) UNLAWFUL PROTEST. The gathering of three or more
74 individuals with the common purpose to create an intentional
75 disturbance, interruption, or breach of the peace.

76 (6) WORSHIP SERVICE. The assemblage of individuals for
77 religious worship.

78 (c) An individual commits the crime of disruption of a
79 worship service if the individual does both of the following:

HB363 INTRODUCED



85 church building or church property.

86 (2) The individual engages in an unlawful protest,
87 riot, or disorderly conduct inside the church building;
88 otherwise engages in harassment of any individual participant
89 in the worship service; or obstructs the ingress or egress to
90 the church building or church property.

91 (d) An individual who violates this section shall be
92 punished as follows:

93 (1) On a first violation, the individual shall be
94 guilty of a Class C felony.

95 (2) On a second or subsequent violation, the individual
96 shall be guilty of a Class C felony and shall serve a
97 mandatory minimum of five years imprisonment.

98 Section 2. This act shall become effective on October
99 1, 2026.