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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Ronald Waters

DATE: July 10, 2012

SUBJECT: Co-Sponsorship Request – Online Impersonation

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation that will amend Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to include internet or online impersonation as a computer-related offense.

Internet impersonation can be detrimental to a victim's personal and professional life, and opportunities for individuals to impersonate or misrepresent another person continue to expand as the use of the internet surges. California, Florida, Hawaii, New York, Mississippi, and Texas have laws that specifically address internet impersonation, while other states have begun to discuss the ability to curb such destructive and unwarranted acts. As state representatives of this Commonwealth, we should follow the lead of other states and protect the identities of the residents of Pennsylvania by establishing internet impersonation as an offense and imposing penalties on those individuals violating such laws.

My legislation would amend 18 Pa.C.S. by establishing internet impersonation as a third-degree misdemeanor, for any individual that impersonates another individual, without their knowledge or consent, through a webpage on a commercial social networking site, electronic mail, instant message, text message, or similar communication. This legislation will further penalize those individuals that impersonate a public official through such means of communication by grading the act as a second-degree misdemeanor.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Nilda Jenkins at 717-772-6955 or njenkins@pahouse.net.