



Stalking Erin Andrews — Or Anyone, Really — Is About To Get A Lot Harder



Erin Andrews was on Capitol Hill yesterday to advocate for a bill that would include newer technologies in federal anti-stalking laws, as well as expand the definition of stalking. It just **passed** in the House. How badly is it needed?

By *Irin Carmon* Jul 28, 2010 10:35 AM

A visibly emotional Andrews told a press conference, among other comments, "One thing I've learned is you don't really talk about how you travel anymore...information is very

accessible, people talked about how we're in the technology age, so there have been different measures taken." She also talked about how the video her stalker made of her will be on the Internet in perpetuity.

Introduced by [Loretta Sanchez](#), [HR 5662](#) is also known as "Simplifying The Ambiguous Law, Keeping Everyone Reliably Safe Act of 2010," or the 'STALKERS Act of 2010'. (See what they did there?) Salon describes it thusly:

The measure allows for stricter punishment in cases where the conduct is "in violation of a protection order," or if the victim is under the age of 18... It also updates federal anti-stalking law to include newer technologies — including cellphone cameras and text messaging — which were previously omitted; and it expands the definition of stalking to "conduct [that] would be reasonably expected to cause the other person serious emotional distress."

With ever newer ways for stalkers to gather information on their targets — including with services like Facebook and Foursquare providing [a platform and a mechanism](#) for existing creeps out there — this seems long overdue. As Alexis A. Moore, a victim's [advocate](#), high-tech investigator and former victim of digitally-enabled stalking told me last month, the U.S. lags behind Australia and in Canada in its enforcement of cyberstalking, in part because of lack of collaboration between federal agencies.

I'd contacted her to ask about an Australian case where the creator of a Facebook page about the "100 Biggest Sluts" in the region was [likely to face](#) stalking charges for naming names in the group. "Stalking covers quite a large range of actions and one of them is using the computer to offend or harass a particular person," said an official at the time.

Moore, whose abusive ex-boyfriend first traditionally stalked her and then used the Internet to cancel her auto insurance and credit cards and mess with her bank accounts, told me, "I was kind of shocked that they took action [in the Australian case]. But I don't see how it would even possible in the US to take action over one Facebook page when we can't help women who have been stalked 5-10 years here in the States." Why not? "There just aren't the resources. Not every [police] unit has a cyberstalking division. In California there may be a high tech unit in one office for every five counties."

Sanchez's bill was [passed](#) Tuesday, and Minnesota Senator [Amy Klobuchar](#) said she would introduce a similar bill in the Senate with a Republican co-sponsor. She also said, "Stalking is one of the most invasive, violating crimes a person can commit yet it is also one of the most difficult to prove and trickiest to prosecute."

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