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Great Falls Delegation

Stalking Fines

In Montana, the act of stalking a person is an offense that can be charged with anywhere from a 1 year to 6 years in county prison, a fine between \$1000 dollars to \$6000 dollars, or both if circumstances prove dire enough. Those circumstances can include threatening, incessantly following, or intimidating the stalked person whether in person, by mail, or by electronic communications. However, as stated in the Montana Code Annotated 2007, such actions are only initially charged by a fine no more than \$1000 dollars, a sentence in county jail no more than 1 year, or both. Similarly, the act of assaulting a sport's official has a fine of the same maximum amount, but only with a sentence that cannot exceed 6 months.

I find it disturbing that, despite being a far more solemn and severe crime, stalking has such a low initial fine. Not to belittle assaulting a sport's official, but it is merely trivial in comparison to the repeated threatening of another person's life rather than a passing trifle. Such behavior should not be taken lightly under any circumstances. Therefore, the initial fines for stalking should match the possible sentence in jail fairly and proportionally. Rather than letting offenders get off easy, let us better prevent their future actions by "upping the anti" and raising the fine amount so that it justly serves it's cause.

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