

HB 994 -- MOTORCYCLE HELMETS

SPONSOR: Dusenberg

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Transportation by a vote of 10 to 6.

This bill requires only persons younger than 21 years of age to wear protective headgear when operating or riding as a passenger on any motorcycle or motortricycle. Currently, all motorcyclists are required to wear protective headgear.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2007, FY 2008, and FY 2009.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say the bill is an issue of freedom and the right of adults to make their own choices.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dusenberg; Freedom of Road Riders; ABATE for Missouri; and Joseph T. Bryan.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that head injury is the leading cause of death in motorcycle accidents. While appropriate protective headgear does not prevent every head injury, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that helmets are 67% effective in preventing brain injuries and 34% effective in preventing fatalities in motorcycle accidents. It has been proven that helmet laws translate into increased helmet usage which in turn saves lives and reduces head trauma.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri State Medical Association; Brain Injury Association of Missouri; Missouri Safety Center; Nancy Koenig; Department of Transportation; Missouri College of Emergency Physicians; Missouri Hospital Association; Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety; and Missouri Safety Council.

Robert Triplett, Legislative Analyst