

HB 523 -- MOTORCYCLE HELMETS

SPONSOR: Burlison

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Transportation by a vote of 8 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on State and Local Governments by a vote of 6 to 1.

Currently, an individual operating or riding as a passenger on any motorcycle or motortricycle upon any state highway must wear protective headgear when the vehicle is in motion. This bill specifies that this provision will not apply to an individual 21 years of age or older, unless he or she has only been issued an instruction permit if he or she maintains proof of financial responsibility of at least \$50,000 of personal medical insurance.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the decision to wear a helmet should be decided by consenting adults. The bill will bring Missouri into line with many of its bordering states. There will be little medical cost from accidents because riders are required to purchase personal medical insurance. It will increase tourism because motorcyclists will stop avoiding Missouri in order to ride without a helmet.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Burlison; Tim O'Connar; Tony Shepherd, Abate for Missouri; Jason Cadell; Duane Harrison; Jeff Riebeling; Mary Hovis; Trinity Blegen; Sharon Tindell; Dale Thomas; Robin Brown; Jay Flagg; Kim Fields; Deanna Seymour; Tristan Duncan; Mark Davis; Danne Roberts; Kathleen M. Duncan; Monica Seidner; Kenneth A. Lewis; Steve Seidner; Mathew Thornhill; Ramona Thornhill; Kerry Lewis; Reverend Terry Lee Cook, Freedom of Road Riders; Johnnie D. Smith; Becky Rose; Lynne Adkins; Susan Lockhart; Mark Roloff; Anna Kabler; William Duncan; Laura Williams; Roy Williams; Ronald E. Palmer; Tracy Davis; Amy Allmon; Adam K Brown; Terra Hartman; Olin Meadors; Leland Seymour; Karol Thornhill; Cindy Morris; Norma J Gettinger; John C. Stouffer; Keith Wm. York; Lydia M. Acuff; Terry Cobb; Les Morris; Alyssa Duncan; O. Calvin Longford; Carlond Hammond; Richard Derks; and Doug Hilburn.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say evidence from other states show that many more people will be killed due to not wearing their helmets. The threat to human life outweighs people's freedom to choose whether or not to wear a helmet. Medical costs relating to head injuries due to not wearing a helmet easily exceed the \$50,000 insurance requirement.

Testifying against the bill were Leanna Depue, Department of Transportation; Maureen Cunningham, Brain Injury Association of Missouri; Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and

Surgeons; David Alan McArthur II; Gamble & Schlemeier; Missouri State Medical Association; Michael A Sparks; Raymond Pierce, Missouri Motorcycle Safety Program; Missouri Hospital Association; and Missouri Academy of Family Physicians.

Testifying on the bill was Kemp Shoun, State Highway Patrol.