

HCS HB 1464 -- MOTORCYCLE HELMETS

SPONSOR: Burlison

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Transportation by a vote of 8 to 3. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on State and Local Governments by a vote of 7 to 3.

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 modifies the requirement to individuals under 21 years of age.

Qualified motorcycle operators over 21 years of age, who have completed a motorcycle safety education course, may operate a motorcycle or motortricycle upon state highways without protective headgear if they possess insurance that provides first-party medical benefits in the amount of \$50,000 for injuries incurred in an accident while operating a motorcycle or motortricycle.

This bill is the same as HB 523 (2015).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that helmets do not always save lives, and that the decision of whether or not to wear a helmet should be left to motorcyclists themselves. Missouri could also gain more revenue from those motorcyclists who would otherwise avoid Missouri because of its current helmet requirement.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Burlison; Steven Bennett; William Bennett; Miles A. McInney Jr.; Bryce A. Henzler; Dale Thomas; Terri Kempker; Joe Widmer; Bill Kempker; Amy Allmon; Steve Allmon; and Tony Shepherd.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that current law saves lives and medical expenses. Helmets also protect other drivers by keeping a motorcyclist's vision clear of debris.

Testifying against the bill were Raymond Pierce, Missouri Motorcycle Safety Program; Missouri State Medical Association; Teresa Rogers; Michael A. Spelks; Maureen Cunningham, Brain Injury Association Of Missouri; Andrews M. Paulus; Missouri Hospital Association; Chris Grateke; Bill Whitfield, Missouri Department Of Transportation; Danny Barnes, Jackson County Sherriffs Office; and the Missouri State Troopers Association.