



Highway Safety Coalition Urges Unicameral to Keep Current Helmet Law

Lincoln, NE, (January 23, 2023) — Today, a coalition of organizations announces strong opposition to a legislative proposal that would substantially weaken Nebraska’s motorcycle helmet law, and therefore increase the number of deaths and traumatic injuries on the state’s highways.

LB 91 would allow motorcyclists over the age of 21 to ride without a helmet, whereas current law requires all riders to wear helmets.

Motorcycle helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 69 percent and lower the risk of death by 42 percent. In 2020, in states without universal helmet laws saw a 57 percent death rate among motorcyclists who were not wearing helmets, compared to 11 percent in states with universal helmet laws, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. From the Government Accountability Office, “laws requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets are the only strategy proven to be effective in reducing motorcyclist fatalities.” After Michigan weakened its all-rider helmet law in 2012, the percentage of non-helmeted crash scene fatalities quadrupled, and the number of motorcyclist trauma patients hospitalized with a head injury rose 14%.

Multiple studies of states that have repealed their motorcycle helmet law show an increase in rider deaths, serious and disabling brain injuries and medical costs, which are usually borne by taxpayers and the state. Annually, motorcycle crashes cost \$13 billion in economic impact and \$66 billion in societal harm, as measured by comprehensive costs based on 2010 data. When adjusted only for inflation, these amounts increase to \$17 billion and \$86 billion, respectively. Serious injuries and fatalities accounted for 87 percent of total comprehensive costs of motorcycle crashes, compared to 57 percent of the total comprehensive costs of all motor vehicle crashes. The repeal of all-rider motorcycle helmet laws has led to increased economic costs, including insurance premiums, in many states.

According to a survey conducted by AAA, 81% of Nebraskans support maintaining the state’s current law. The current law has worked well in keeping motorcyclists safe on our roadways. We cannot afford to weaken it.

AAA – The Auto Club Group
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

American Physical Therapy Association Nebraska
Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska
Kids and Car Safety
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals
National Transportation Safety Board
Nebraska Hospital Association
Nebraska Medical Association
Nebraska Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.
Nebraska Safety Council
Society for the Advancement of Violence and Injury Research
SMARTER