



URGENT: Action Needed to Defeat Motorcycle Helmet Repeal Bill

Background on Status of Tennessee SB 1450/HB 42 to Repeal Tennessee's All-Rider Helmet Requirement:

Numerous efforts have been made to repeal Tennessee's all-rider helmet since the law was first enacted over 56 years ago. This year, lawmakers have introduced Senate Bill (SB) 1450 / House Bill (HB) 42, legislation that would effectively eliminate the state's all-rider helmet law by establishing a four-year "pilot program," during which time motorcycle operators and passengers 21 years of age or older with health insurance would be exempt from helmet requirements. The bills also reduce enforcement to secondary. The Tennessee House Transportation Subcommittee is holding a hearing to consider SB 1450/HB 42 on Wednesday, March 1, at 1:30 p.m. CST. SB 1450 has been referred to the Senate Transportation and Safety Committee, but no public hearing has been scheduled at this time.

Our Ask: Please contact the members of the House Transportation Subcommittee and urge them to oppose SB 1450/HB 42 ASAP:

We need your help. Please contact the Tennessee House Transportation Subcommittee members to urge them to oppose this dangerous legislation.

House Transportation Subcommittee Members:

- Chair: Rep. Sam Whitson (R-65), Franklin (Williamson County), rep.sam.whitson@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-1864
- Rep. Joe Towns Jr. (D-84), Memphis (Shelby County), rep.joe.towns@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-2189
- Rep. Torrey Harris (D-91), Memphis (Shelby County), rep.torrey.harris@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-2239
- Rep. Ronnie Glynn (D-67), Clarksville (Montgomery County), rep.ronnie.glynn@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-2043
- Rep. Dan Howell (R-22), Cleveland (Meigs, Polk, Bradley Counties), rep.dan.howell@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-7799
- Rep. Dave Wright (R-19), Corryton (Knox County), rep.dave.wright@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-6879
- Rep. Tim Hicks (R-6), Gray (Washington County), rep.tim.hicks@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-1717
- Rep. Lowell Russell (R-21), Vonore (Loudon, Monroe Counties), rep.lowell.russell@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-3736
- Rep. Tandy Darby (R-76), Greenfield (Weakly, Carroll, Henry Counties), rep.tandy.darby@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-7847
- Rep. Dale Carr (R-12), Sevierville (Sevier County), rep.dale.carr@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-5981
- Rep. Pat Marsh (R-62), Shelbyville (Bedford, Moore, Lincoln Counties), rep.pat.marsh@capitol.tn.gov
- Rep. Patsy Hazlewood (R-27), Signal Mountain (Hamilton County), rep.patsy.hazlewood@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-2746
- Rep. Greg Vital (R-29), Harrison (Hamilton County), rep.greg.vital@capitol.tn.gov, 615-741-3025

Talking Points:

- For over 56 years, Tennessee's all-rider helmet law has been preventing deaths and injuries and saving taxpayer dollars in the state. Repealing this critical law would be a deadly and costly mistake.
- In 2021, 171 motorcycle riders died on Tennessee roads according to the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security. The number of motorcycle rider fatalities in Tennessee increased by more than 13 percent between 2020 and 2021. Repealing Tennessee's all-rider motorcycle helmet law is contrary to the urgent need to improve motorcycle rider safety.
- If SB 1450/HB 42 is passed, Tennessee will see increases in deaths and injuries associated with motorcycle crashes, as well as an increased financial burden on Tennessee's emergency services, hospitals, and taxpayers.
- Motorcycle helmets are proven lifesavers and injury preventers. In the event of a crash, helmet-wearing reduces a motorcycle rider's risk of head injury by 69 percent and risk of death by 42 percent.
- According to a report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), laws requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets are the only strategy proven to be effective in reducing motorcyclist fatalities.
- A partial age helmet law, as created by SB 1450/HB 42, is extremely difficult for a police officer to enforce. Police will be unable to know if a motorcyclist riding by without a helmet is over 21 and has the required health

insurance, and especially as the bills would also reduce the law to secondary enforcement. Secondary enforcement requires the officer to observe an additional violation, such as speeding, before enforcing the helmet law.

- Age-specific helmet laws, such as SB 1450/HB 42, are ineffective, unenforceable and unpopular. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, in states with weak youth-specific helmet laws, use decreased and youth mortality increased. Serious traumatic brain injury among youth was 38 percent higher in states with age-specific laws compared to states with all-rider helmet laws.
- Experience and data have proven that states that repeal an all-rider motorcycle helmet law always experience an increase in rider deaths, serious and disabling brain injuries, and medical costs usually borne by taxpayers and the state. When Florida repealed its all-rider helmet law in 2000, rider death rates in the state increased by close to 25 percent. Deaths of motorcycle riders under the age of 21 who were not helmeted increased by 188 percent, even though the law still applied to them.
- The American Automobile Association (AAA) Foundation Traffic Safety Culture Index that found more than four in five Americans (82%) support a law requiring all motorcycle riders to wear a helmet.

Thank you for your assistance in helping to oppose the helmet repeal effort. Please contact Tara Gill (tgill@saferoads.org) with Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety if you have questions or need more information.