



January 19, 2024

The Honorable Mike Moser, Chairperson
The Honorable Barry DeKay, Vice Chairperson
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee
Nebraska Legislature
Post Office Box 94604
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

Dear Chairperson Moser and Vice Chairperson DeKay:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, opposes Legislative Bill (LB) 1004, which would further reduce the limited requirement for riders to wear a motorcycle helmet and undercut their lifesaving protection.

Motorcycles are the most hazardous form of motor vehicle transportation, and fatalities are rising. In 2021, 5,932 motorcyclists were killed in the U.S., the most on record.ⁱ Motorcycle riders are nearly 28 times more likely to die in a crash than people in passenger vehicles.ⁱⁱ In 2021, 21 motorcyclists lost their lives in Nebraska.ⁱⁱⁱ Preventing motorcycle rider fatalities requires more helmet usage, not less.

In addition to being deadly and damaging, motorcycle crashes are expensive. In 2020, motorcycle crashes cost Nebraska \$687 million.^{iv} A significant reason is medical care. The injuries sustained by unhelmeted riders are often more severe than those wearing helmets leading to higher medical costs.^v

Exempting motorcycle passengers from wearing helmets because the driver has taken a course will decrease safety. There is no independent evidence that courses reduce risk. Moreover, it will be impossible for police to identify whether a driver has completed the required course.

Helmets are vital as they reduce the risk of head injury by 69 percent and risk of death by 42 percent.^{vi} Rather than further weakening helmet requirements, Nebraska should restore the research-backed all-rider motorcycle helmet law.

With motorcyclist fatalities at record levels and crash-related costs soaring, we urge you to oppose LB 1004.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase
President

cc: Transportation and Telecommunications Committee Members

ⁱ Traffic Safety Facts: 2021 Data, Motorcycles, NHTSA, Jun. 2023 (Revised), DOT HS 813 466, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813466>.

ⁱⁱ Traffic Safety Facts. 2020 Data: Motorcycles, NHTSA, May 2022, DOT HS 813 306.

ⁱⁱⁱ NHSTA State Traffic Safety Information for Nebraska, accessible at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>.

^{iv} Nebraska Motorcycle Information Packet, Nebraska Department of Transportation, January 2023.

^v Costs of Injuries Resulting from Motorcycle Crashes: A Literature Review, NHTSA, November 2002, DOT HS 809 242.

^{vi} Liu BC, Ivers R, Norton R, Boufous S, Blows S, and Lo SK, "Helmets for Preventing Injury in Motorcycle Riders (Review)," The Cochrane Library, 2009.