

## **Top Reasons Why Florida Should Pass an All Rider Motorcycle Helmet Law**

### **1. Helmet Laws Save Lives:**

Death rates from head injuries are twice as high among motorcyclist in states without all rider helmet laws. Motorcycle helmets are 37 percent effective in preventing motorcyclist deaths and 67 percent effective in preventing brain injuries.

### **2. Helmet Laws Increase Use:**

Studies show that helmet use approaches 100% in states with all rider motorcycle helmet laws. In states without all rider laws, helmet use was 53% in 2002 and only 46% in 2005. Age-specific helmet laws are virtually impossible to enforce and there is no evidence that these laws reduce deaths and injuries.

### **3. Fiscal responsibility:**

Unhelmeted riders have higher health care costs as a result of their crash injuries and nearly half lack private insurance. The financial burden for treatment and care of uninsured motorcycle crash victims is placed on the government and taxpayers. In 2005, Maryland estimated that a repeal of its all-rider helmet law would increase Medicaid expenditures by 1.2 million in the first year and annually up to 1.5 million thereafter.

### **4. Fatalities and Injuries are Climbing**

In 2005, 4,553 motorcycle riders died in crashes. Motorcycle fatalities are at their highest level in 20 years, and now account for over 10% of all annual fatalities, even though motorcycles make up less than 2% of all registered vehicles and only 0.4% of all vehicle miles traveled.

### **5. The Public Overwhelmingly Supports Helmet Laws.**

According to a motor vehicle occupant survey conducted by NHTSA, 81% reported that they favor mandatory helmet use laws for motorcyclist. A 2004 Lou Harris poll commissioned by advocates yielded the same results.

### **6. Alternatives are Costly and Ineffective:**

There is no scientific evidence that motorcycle rider training reduces crash risk and is an adequate substitute for all rider helmet law. A review conducted in 1996 by the Traffic Injury Research Foundations concluded that there is "no compelling evidence that rider training is associated with reductions in collisions." The Centers for Disease Control and Preventions also support these claims. If elimination of risk exposure is not possible, then risk management, in the form of universal helmet law, is the next best option.

### **7. Helmets Do Not Increase The Likelihood of Spinal Injury or Crash.**

Critics of helmet laws often cite a highly disputed study by J.P. Goldstein indicating that added weight of helmets cause neck and spinal injuries during crashes. More than a dozen peer-reviewed medical studies have refuted this claim. A study reported in the Annals of Emergency Medicine in 1994 analyzed 1,153 motorcycle crashes in four states and determined that helmets reduced head injuries without an increased occurrence of spinal injuries in motorcycle trauma. Studies also show that helmet do not restrict vision, interfere with hearing or cause heat discomfort.

(Sources: The 2007 Roadmap to State Highway Safety Laws, NHTSA, Fatal Analysis Reporting System 2005: Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.)