



ABATE OF MARYLAND, INC.

Dedicated to the Freedom of the Road and Responsible Motorcycle Legislation

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr. Chairman and Members of the
Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Assistant Executive Director, Kenneth V. Sawyer, Abate of Maryland,
Inc.

DATE: March 20, 2023

RE: **Senate Bill 933-Vehicle Laws - Protective Headgear
Requirement for Motorcycle Riders - Exception**

POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

Please accept and consider the following testimony I present to you in favor of helmet choice for adult motorcyclists in Maryland.

Abate of Maryland, Inc. has been working to try and restore this freedom of choice that was taken from Maryland motorcyclists for a second time in 1992.

Currently, only 19 states have laws requiring riders to wear helmets. In 2020 Missouri became the most recent state to repeal its law and the issue is being discussed in several other states.

This bill has been presented numerous times and opponents to providing helmet choice cite safety as their reason for mandatory helmet use for motorcyclists. Setting aside the cherry-picked safety statistics cited by our opponents, we believe adults should be able to make the choice for themselves whether to wear a helmet.

The Motorcycle Rider's Foundation and the American Motorcyclist Association, the two largest motorcycle rider organizations in the country, support helmet choice.

Just because Abate and other motorcycle organizations are against mandatory helmet laws does not mean we are against helmet use; we would continue to lobby for a change, if the law was that helmet use was illegal. We believe that the choice of the individual rider is the only choice that matters.

Abate of Maryland is not a radical group. We are not the trouble makers that are seen on your local newscasts riding unregistered motorcycles, ATV's, or dirt bikes on the streets or causing chaos disrupting the flow of traffic on the beltway. We are



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hardworking Marylander's that enjoy the freedom of the road. Our ranks include lawyers, accountants, tradesman, small business owners, commercial truck drivers, engineers, military personnel, retired school nurses, administrative professionals, mechanics, and even legislators in this body. We are perfectly capable of making an informed choice regarding our safety.

The supporters of SB 933 are only asking for the right to choose.

Please support SB 933.

Kenneth V. Sawyer, Assistant Executive Director
Abate of Maryland, Inc.