



March 20, 2023

Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller SOB
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for Maryland Senate Bill 933

Chairman Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The American Motorcyclist Association has long advocated for the rights of motorcyclists and the motorcycling lifestyle. The AMA believes adults should have the right to voluntarily decide when to wear a helmet and does not oppose laws requiring helmets for minor motorcycle operators and passengers.

Maryland Senate Bill 933 would establish an exception to the prohibition against operating or riding on a motorcycle without certain protective headgear for an individual at least 21 years of age who has been licensed to operate a motorcycle for at least 2 years or has completed a certain motorcycle safety course and for the individual's passenger.

Mandatory helmet laws do nothing to prevent crashes. Regardless of the protective equipment worn, any motorcyclist involved in a crash is at considerable risk. This makes it even more vital to avoid a motorcycle crash in the first place, a strategy widely recognized and pursued in the motorcycling community. The AMA asserts that helmet use alone is insufficient to ensure a motorcyclist's safety. There is a broad range of other measures that can be implemented to improve the skill of motorcycle operators, as well as reduce the frequency of situations where other vehicle operators are the cause of crashes involving motorcycles.

The AMA holds that a common principle should be applied when consideration is given to mandating personal safety, whether it be for motorcycling or some other risk-related activity: Adults are capable of making personal safety decisions for themselves. Society's role is not to mandate personal safety, but rather to provide the education and experience necessary to aid adults in making these decisions for themselves.

The AMA supports S.B. 933 and thanks you for your willingness to consider this legislation.

Founded in 1924, the American Motorcyclist Association is the premier advocate of the motorcycling community. We represent the interests of millions of on- and off-highway motorcyclists. Our mission is to promote the motorcycling lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tiffany Cipoletti'.

Tiffany Cipoletti
Government Relations Manager, On-Highway
American Motorcyclist Association