

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 143 (Delegate Owings. *et al.*)
Commerce and Government Matters

Vehicle Laws - Motorcycle Helmets - Minors

This bill provides that motorcycle helmet laws apply only to minors.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal decrease in general fund revenues due to the issuance of fewer citations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal effect on small businesses to the extent that individuals who purchase motorcycles decide not to purchase a helmet. The majority of motorcycle dealers are small businesses.

Analysis

Current Law: Any individual, regardless of age, is required to wear a helmet while riding or operating a motorcycle.

Background: Twenty-one states require all motorcycle riders to wear helmets. Twenty-six states require minors to wear helmets. In several of these states, adults must also wear helmets unless they pass a rider training course or have a specified amount of insurance, or both. Colorado, Illinois, and Iowa do not require helmets under any circumstance.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, helmets are 29% effective in preventing death from motorcycle accidents and 67% effective in preventing brain injuries. In 1997, there were 50 deaths for every 100,000 registered motorcyclists.

State Revenues: In fiscal 1999, 283 citations were issued for failure to wear a helmet while riding or operating a motorcycle. The citation carries a fine of \$60. General fund revenues could decrease minimally as fewer citations are issued for violations of helmet requirements.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

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