



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in OPPOSITION to SB 237
Vehicle Laws - Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders - Exception**

Sponsors: Senator Hough et al

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **opposes SB 237**, which exempts an individual who is 21 years of age or older from wearing protective headgear, or a helmet, while operating or riding a motorcycle if the individual:
 - has been licensed to operate a motorcycle for at least two years;
 - has completed an approved motorcycle rider safety course; or
 - is a passenger on a motorcycle operated by a rider who meets these criteria from the requirement to wear specified protective headgear while operating or riding on a motorcycle.
- According to the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), Maryland's trauma centers treated 904 patients involved in motorcycle crashes during fiscal 2019. Ninety percent of these patients (812) were age 21 or older, and 28.4% of them (231) sustained a head injury, 26 of whom subsequently died. Of the 231 riders who sustained head injuries, 26 percent were not wearing a helmet.
- While the number (4,958) of motorcyclists killed in crashes decreased nationally by nearly five percent in 2018, motorcyclists are still overrepresented in traffic fatalities, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).
- AAA and traffic safety advocates across the country want to decrease the number of motorcycle-related injuries, and further reduce motorcyclist fatalities by supporting and strengthening laws that require helmet use, not repealing existing laws.
- Wearing a helmet is required in more than 19 states and the District of Columbia.
- Because serious head injury is common among fatally injured motorcyclists, helmet use is essential.
- The use of protective headgear saves lives. NHTSA estimates that helmets saved the lives of 1,872 motorcyclists in 2017 and that an additional 749 lives could have been saved if all motorcyclists had worn helmets.
- AAA **opposes** any legislation that will weaken existing traffic safety laws and put motorcyclists, bicyclists, motorists or pedestrians at a greater risk of injury or a traffic fatality; therefore, we oppose **SB 237** and respectfully urge the Committee to render an **unfavorable** report.

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