

Senate Bill 712
Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders- Exception
Testimony in Opposition
Senate Judicial Proceedings
February 23, 2021

Chairman William Smith Jr. and members of the committee,

I am the Director of Community Outreach and External Affairs for the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, University of Maryland Medical Center, who I represent today.

In FY20 we cared for nearly 7,000 critically injured and ill patients. Of those 192 were due to a motorcycle crash and 5 of these patients expired. The length of stay with us could be as long as 100 days as was the case for one patient. As you can imagine this causes extreme hardship on the family both emotionally and financially.

- There were 5,014 motorcycle fatalities nationally in 2019 and 84,000 injuries (1)
- Motorcycle riders represented 14% of all traffic fatalities, (2) while representing only 3% of all registered vehicles (3)
- Helmets are currently saving \$2.7 billion in economic costs annually (4)

My testimony is in opposition to Senate Bill 712 because of these statistics. If an injury or fatality is preventable wouldn't you put your constituent's best interest first?

- Motorcycles are the most hazardous form of motor vehicle transportation.
- NHTSA estimates that 1872 riders' lives in the United States were saved by motorcycle helmets and 749 additional fatalities could have been prevented if the riders had worn helmets (2017). (5)

Traumatic brain injury is a serious, potentially life-long injury that can result from a motorcycle crash, especially when the rider is not wearing a helmet. Lifetime care for a traumatic brain injury can easily amount to millions of dollars. Helmet use reduces the cost of medical treatment, length of hospital stay and probability of long-term disability for those riders injured in crashes. The provisions in the bill to improve safety, two years riding experience and passing a safety course before being permitted to ride un-helmeted, will not mitigate the severe and serious

damage that will be caused by repealing Maryland's all-rider motorcycle helmet law. If SB712 is passed, it will result in an increased financial burden on Maryland's emergency medical services, hospitals, Medicaid and ultimately, every Maryland taxpayer.

Motorcycle crash deaths are costly, and very often preventable. The single most effective way for states to save lives and save money is a universal helmet law. (CDC)

- Motorcycle helmets are currently preventing \$17 billion in societal harm annually. (6)

We urge you to oppose this legislation and protect your constituents from preventable injuries and/or fatalities by requiring a motorcycle helmet for all riders.

Respectfully submitted,

Tara Reed Carlson, MS, RN
Director, Community
Outreach and External
Affairs
22 S. Greene Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
tcarlson@umm.edu

1. Traffic Safety Facts, Research Note: Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2019, NHTSA, December 2020, DOT HS 813 060.
2. Traffic Safety Facts, Research Note: Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2019, NHTSA, December 2020, DOT HS 813 060.
3. Highway Statistics 2019, FHWA, available at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2019/>
4. The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised), NHTSA, Nov. 2020, DOT HS 812 981.
5. Traffic Safety Facts 2018: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data, NHTSA, Nov. 2020, DOT HS 812 981.
6. The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2010 (Revised), NHTSA, May 2015 (revised), DOT HS 812 013.