

Senators,

My name is Michelle {Shelli} McLane. I am an avid motorcyclist. I have been a licensed rider since the late 80's; so for almost 40 years. In my time of using motorcycles as one form of transportation and for fun excursions or events that benefit different individuals or groups via charity events, I have run the gamut of being able to operate a motorcycle without the use of a helmet to being required and mandated to utilize one for the "safe operation" of the vehicle.

Firstly, the use of a helmet has zero to do with safe operation of said vehicle. It does not click in place or hold you onto your saddle (aka motorcycle seat).

Helmets are not attached to the vehicle and do not provide any real form of protection if one is hit by a 3500 lb vehicle.

Helmets do not warn riders of oncoming problems or distracted drivers operating their vehicles in an unsafe manner.

Helmets DO NOT PREVENT accidents caused by thoughtless vehicle operators. Education and awareness of what is going on around the rider, does. I have had thoughtless car drivers toss cigarette butts out of their windows while riding by them on a multilane road and have had cigarettes lodge between my helmet and my head, burning my face in the process multiple times. Same with drink cups and cans thrown from vehicles. I have had them hit my body, my face, my helmet and that hurts a whole bunch. Guaranteed!

I have dealt with careless drivers of pickup trucks and cars, not having secured loads in the beds of their vehicles, trailers or tied to the roofs of their vehicles, where household items have come out of the vehicle and hit the roads and ending up directly in the path of my bike. Having to play dodgeball on the road due to unsecured loads is zero fun, and usually the drivers know something fell out or off of their vehicles and do nothing about it.

I literally witnessed a woman be dragged to her death after being caught under the undercarriage of a pickup truck, after the driver she was riding with lost control of his motorcycle due to an illegal lane change and arbitrary stop by a car driver, which occurred directly in front of him. The driver was injured but was alive. His wife, his partner and passenger, was thrown into oncoming traffic and her helmet lodged under the rear drive axle of the pickup truck, who was unable to avoid passing over top of her. Talk about a nightmare which I can never unsee, and a nightmare that gentleman operating the truck has to live with, not to mention her husbands' pain: all because of a thoughtless driver.

Secondly, I have personally dealt with multiple accidents; (1) on my (and as a passenger on 2 other) motorcycle.

First was when I was approximately 21 years old. (I have been riding since I was 16 years old) My mistake was getting on the back of a friends' bike after we had all been lightly drinking alcohol. Or at least I had lightly consumed (2 beers in the span of 6 hours.) The guy, whose bike I was a passenger on, I found out later, had consumed much more than I. We were on Gorsuch Rd in Westminster, and he failed to negotiate a curve properly. The bike went down, he slid with the bike and broke his leg – I was thrown off and HAD I had a helmet on at that time, I would not be here today, as my head barely missed the guardrail that I landed against. The added bulk of the helmet would have broken my neck. Even the officer who showed up at the scene stated that. I ended up with road rash; gravel that had to be picked out over a period of several days.

Second and Third, had 2 different drivers pull out in front of me. Once as a passenger, once operating my own motorcycle. In neither of those accidents did my head ever hit the ground or any other object due to my proximity awareness and how I rolled. I have been lucky, yes, but during the third accident, in 2010, when the driver pulled out in front of me, I was wearing a helmet and the bike went 80 feet in one direction down the hill on rt 26 going down into Baltimore City and I went 80 feet down the same hill only slightly separated from my motorcycle by about 7 feet distance.

The helmet I was wearing didn't stop the accident from happening. It sure as heck didn't stop the other driver from pulling out in front of me with a span of about 20 ft between my bike and where he pulled out from a side road and stopped his vehicle across the lane of traffic I was riding in, to take a phone call, which was very visible through the window of the truck I was looking at; that was blocking my lane of travel. Other drivers saw the same and told the cops that showed up that info. Of course, that driver was "never found". Again, my head never hit the ground or any other object (ie vehicle, vehicle tires etc)

The Shock Docs and their medical minions like to trot out all these facts and figures but fail to cite their sources when hammering on legal licensed motorcyclists, and They way overinflate and fail to differentiate between TBI's caused by motorcycles, and ones that occur in daily life; as can be seen below. They also use a lot of literature well over 20 plus years old when there weren't as many motorcycles on the road.

Right now, in the state of Maryland, according to the IIHS (pdf attached) there were over 65,144 registered motorcycles in Maryland in 2002 – 2023 that number has gone up to 119,139, so a net increase of 54000 registered motorcycles. Please keep that in mind as you read the facts below.

Some facts I have sourced from the internet with their sites cited below content:

- Around 1.7 million Americans sustain a TBI every year.
- About 1,365,000 Americans are treated for a TBI and released from an emergency department annually.
- An estimated 5.4 million people in the US live with disabilities associated with a TBI.
- Without support, 75% of persons in the US with a TBI lose their jobs within 90 days of returning to work.
- The lifetime cost for each severe TBI survivor is estimated to be more than \$4 million.
- Car accidents, falls, and violence are the most common causes of traumatic brain injury.
- About 80% of all TBI cases are categorized as a mild TBI ([Source](#)).

Car accidents are the leading cause of TBI-related deaths of children and young adults between the ages of 5-24 (Source).

The AAST reports that the estimated annual cost of the five or so million people living with disability from a TBI on the US is around \$37.8 billion

<https://treatnow.org/knowledgebase/car-accidents-and-brain-injury-statistics-2020/>

Knowing, this now, why aren't helmets included as safety gear in automobiles and other enclosed vehicles? Why aren't they required when stepping outside of ones house? Or even INSIDE ones house?

University of Md Shock Trauma docs and their medical minions like fabricating lots of erroneous information:

From their OWN LITERATURE – the below chart in a report (attached) issued in Feb, 2023 . Data addressed is 2021 for latest current data. Actual ***registered motorcycles in 2023 are 119,136.***

IN 2021 there were 113,836 registered motorcycles. During that year there were a little over 1300 accidents/crashes and out of that number there were 76 fatalities and of those only 15 were supposedly un-helmeted.


or put it another way	registered motorcycles	113,826	100.00%
	crashes	1,343	1.18%
	fatalities	76	0.0668%
	unhelmeted	15	0.01318%

In other terms, those people who lost their lives are .01318% of the registered motorcyclists. Not even a full 1% of the registered motorcyclists. And while any loss of life is tragic, Death happens to all of us eventually! So, if going by what the medical minions keep espousing every year, Maryland should be having many more accidents and deaths per capita than what is **factually** happening. For the 1343 people involved in accidents, there were registered 112,483 who weren't in accidents out of the registered 113,826 registered motorcycles. Something sure does stink with the numbers they fabricate yearly.

In addition; their report does not state whether those riders were LEGALLY REGISTERED LAW ABIDING RIDERS. Their report does not state the types of bikes they were riding or where the accidents that took those 15 lives occurred. This report does not differentiate between LEGALLY REGISTERED MOTORCYCLISTS AND ILLEGAL DIRTBIKE RIDERS OR ATV RIDERS OR ILLEGAL MOTORCYCLISTS.

By their own admission – or serious Omissions, their report is faulty by not including this information and it sure is not current and up to date. The last info available for this report was 2021 – yet the report was issued in Feb 2023 as current and valid.

One very visible take away is out of 119139



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
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MOTORCYCLE CRASHES AND HELMET USE

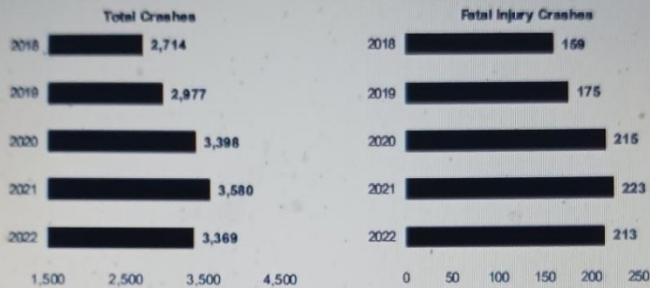
Prepared By:
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February 2023

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Number of Motorcycle Crashes (Benchmarks)	1,748	1,551	1,613	1,481	1,517	1,451	1,274	1,253	1,289	1,343
Number of motorcyclist fatalities (Driver Specific Benchmarks)	75	61	66	70	72	82	57	75	78	76
Number of unhelmeted motorcyclist fatalities (Maryland Crash Data)	15	9	12	9	8	17	9	7	6	15
Percent of fatalities that were unhelmeted	20.0%	14.8%	18.2%	12.9%	11.1%	20.7%	15.8%	9.3%	7.7%	19.7%
5-Year Average						15.41%			14.67%	
						2012-2016			2017-2021	

In our sister state of Pennsylvania, a helmet choice state, the following data (latest I could find was 2022) shows a physical downward trend from helmets vs no helmets – with helmeted riders dying more frequently than non-helmeted riders. In 2017 there were 392,007 registered motorcycles, in 2022 there were 404,904; a net increase of 12,897 of registered motorcycles. Keep those numbers in mind when looking at the data below.

Motorcycle Crashes—Five-Year Trends

In 2022, total motorcycle crashes decreased 5.9% from 2021 while motorcycle fatal injury crashes decreased 4.6% from 2021.

**Motorcycle Fatalities—Five-Year Trends**

Year	Fatalities
2018	164
2019	174
2020	217
2021	226
2022	217
TOTAL	998

Of the 217 fatalities in 2022 involving motorcycle drivers or passengers:

- ▶ 207 (95.4%) were drivers
- ▶ 10 (4.6%) were passengers

Motorcycle Helmet Use in Crashes

The table below shows the injury severity of motorcycle riders (driver or passenger) by helmet usage.

	Fatalities	Injuries	Not Injured	Total Motorcyclists
Wear Helmets	107 (49.3%)	1,734 (55.1%)	208 (52.9%)	2,049 (54.5%)
No Helmets	103 (47.5%)	1,264 (40.2%)	130 (33.1%)	1,497 (39.8%)
Unknown	7 (3.2%)	150 (4.8%)	55 (14.0%)	212 (5.6%)
TOTAL	217 (100.0%)	3,148 (100.0%)	393 (100.0%)	3,758 (100.0%)

Out of almost 405,000 registered motorcycles and riders there were 217 deaths in 2022.

Split almost evenly between un-helmeted and helmeted riders – however as you can clearly see,

Helmeted riders had more deaths and injuries recorded. Hmmmmmmakes you wonder why?

This clearly shows that helmeted riders sustained more injuries and actually had more accidents. Why you may ask? Helmets actually block peripheral vision and hearing, thus preventing the rider/operator from acting to keep themselves safe.

Additionally; when the helmet law was reinstated in 1992, after erroneous, illegal, misguided threats, from the feds stating to states that they would be withholding funds unless they adopted an across the board helmet bill, the state was supposed to provide a list of approved helmets which it NEVER has.

I could provide many more Factual stats and am willing to do so should you wish to have more solid knowledge than what the medical minions fabricate to provide you.

In closing.

Helmets DO NOT PREVENT ACCIDENTS. EDUCATION DOES. USING YOUR BRAIN DOES. PEOPLE NOT DRIVING DISTRACTED DOES.

After stating this, I urge you to vote favorably for SB0503. Please allow us to make the choices that will guide our lives. Please also convince the delegates in the house to vote favorably so we can make Pappy's (and countless others) years of hard work count for something. Get rid of this helmet mandate and allow your voting constituents the right to govern and author their own lives. We are not asking for the revocation of a persons' right to choose. We are not demanding a permanent ban on helmets! All we are asking for is the ability to exercise our rights as over 21-year-old, free thinking, tax paying and voting motorcyclists to make our choices of whether we want to wear helmets or not.

Thank You,

Respectfully

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