

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and members of the committee. My name is Robert G. Spanburgh, Jr. I am the Legislative Representative and Chairman of the Board for ABATE of Maryland, our state's largest motorcycle rights organization.

I am respectfully requesting that the committee give a favorable vote to SB0397 (protective headgear requirement exception) named in remembrance of our former Director and Board Chairman, the late Gary "Pappy" Boward.

I have been a registered motorcyclist for over 40 years. When I obtained the class "M" endorsement on my Maryland driver's license, helmet usage was not mandated. I was able to exercise my freedom of choice as it pertains to helmet usage for 10 years, until helmet usage was mandated in 1992. In the over 30 years, since that time, fatality rates in motorcycle accidents in Maryland have not increased or decreased significantly.

Our organization continues to advocate for rider education to create and maintain a safer and more enjoyable riding experience for Maryland motorcyclists. We believe that accident avoidance is our most important asset in providing a safe motorcycling experience.

With this in mind, we ask for a favorable vote on SB0397.

Thank you.