



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2008

A.B.A.T.E. of PA's Response to the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee Report, "Motorcycle Injuries and Fatalities since the 2003 Repeal of the Mandatory Helmet Law"

On June 25, 2008, the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee released its 2008 report, "Motorcycle Injuries and Fatalities since the 2003 Repeal of the Mandatory Helmet Law". A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania, the Alliance of Bikers Aimed Toward Education highlights the following findings of the report:

"..the average annual fatality rate for the four years after repeal of the helmet law (5.9 fatalities per 10,000 registered motorcycles) is virtually identical to the average annual fatality rate for the three years prior to repeal (5.9 fatalities per 10,000 registered motorcycles)."

"...the rate of crashes per 10,000 motorcycle registrations actually declined from 132.4 in Calendar Year 2000 to 113.2 crashes per 10,000 motorcycle registrations in Calendar Year 2007."

Major injury rates declined from 18.6 per 10,000 registrations (2001-2002) to 16.7 per 10,000 registrations (2006-2007).

Moderate injury rates declined from 47.2 per 10,000 registrations (2001-2002) to 38.8 per 10,000 registrations (2006-2007).

The above conclusions are based on motorcycle accident data supplied by PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation to the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee.

Conclusions by A.B.A.T.E. of PA

According to the data, modification of Pennsylvania's helmet law in 2003 has not resulted in a significant increase in crashes, fatalities, or serious injuries to motorcyclists when the increase in registrations is taken into account. In fact, the rates have declined.

If mandatory helmet laws were effective in improving the outcome of motorcycle accidents, findings like the above simply could not exist, and the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee's report would tell a different story. The legislatures of twenty-nine other states have recognized this and, like Pennsylvania, allow responsible adult riders to decide when a helmet is appropriate.

A.B.A.T.E. of PA continues to emphasize that the most effective means of reducing motorcycle injuries is accident prevention rather than accident survivability. It should be obvious that the most effective means of reducing motorcycle deaths and injuries is to prevent motorcycle accidents. To this end, A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania has consistently promoted rider education, driver education, enhanced public awareness of motorcyclists, and safe design of roads and traffic control devices.

This report has proven that the helmet law modification did not increase the dangers to motorcyclists. A.B.A.T.E. of PA encourages the Legislature to turn its attention toward those things that do have an impact on the safety of the state's motorcyclists.

A.B.A.T.E. is the "Alliance of Bikers Aimed Toward Education". It is an organization of motorcyclists dedicated to the protection of the individual rights of motorcyclists through political change, public education, and charitable works. ABATE is active in the elimination of unfair legislation as it concerns motorcyclists; promoting motorcycle safety through both motorist and rider education; and improving the image of motorcyclists to the general public.

ABATE's goal and purpose is to keep motorcyclists, members, and the public informed, to promote safe riding habits, and to encourage favorable legislation for motorcyclists. This is accomplished through a monthly newsletter, e-mail alerts, safety & education programs, working with the state and federal legislators, and voter registration promotion.

Since 1983, A.B.A.T.E. has represented the interests of motorcyclists riding Pennsylvania's roads. Through a variety of programs, A.B.A.T.E. is working to protect and preserve the rights of over 800,000 licensed motorcyclists.