

A.B.A.T.E. OF PENNSYLVANIA

**SO YOU THINK A.B.A.T.E. IS A
ONE-ISSUE ORGANIZATION...**

NEVER WAS AND NEVER WILL BE !

**AN ALLIANCE OF BIKERS
DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION
OF THE INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS
OF MOTORCYCLISTS
THROUGH POLITICAL CHANGE,
CHARITABLE WORKS
AND PUBLIC EDUCATION**

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March 17, 2012

So you think ABATE is a one-issue organization....

Never was and never will be!

It's happened to all of us, a fellow motorcyclist approaches you about joining A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania and wants to know "what has ABATE ever done for me?" Naturally, the first thing that comes to mind is our long but successful fight to win freedom of choice in the use of helmets. But, we have done so much more, if we could only remember it.

The following document provides some answers to that question. It is a reminder of some of the good works done and progress made since A.B.A.T.E. of PA was re-incorporated as the Alliance of Bikers Aimed Toward Education in 1983.

It is easy to forget how far we have come since those days. How naïve about the legislative process we were, and how much we have had to learn, often the hard way, about how to be heard by the Legislature. We were outsiders, and although that is considered by some to be a morally superior position, it is ineffective in the end. We had much to learn and much to accomplish.

In 1983, we were a group of men and women, earnest motorcyclists, with the best of intentions but little or no know-how to accomplish our goals. Over the years, we found people, leaders and workers, who would acquire the needed experience, skills and savvy to bring our issues successfully before the Legislature and the Governor.

This over view will detail the particulars of our accomplishments. Review them carefully. Remind yourself, or become familiar for the first time, with all the good A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania has done since 1983, and continues to do today. It should finally answer any question you or anyone you may be talking to, may have about "what A.B.A.T.E. has done for me", and all motorcyclists in Pennsylvania.

April 17, 1985 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania met with the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Dealers Association in Reading and proposed working together on legislative issues. While no action resulted from that initial meeting, we have since become associate members of PMDA and shared the same lobbyist.

May 20, 1985 –A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania presented a \$500 check to Representative Joseph Pitts for the Capitol Preservation Committee "Save the Flags" campaign.

July 1, 1985 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania sent a letter to PennDOT and proposed a six-month moratorium on the helmet law. PennDOT rejected proposal.

October 6, 1985 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania presented \$600 to the National Pennsylvania Park Service in Gettysburg to help restore the Pennsylvania Monument. A.B.A.T.E. received a citation from Representative Ken Cole for the contribution.

January 21, 1986 – Press conference held at the state capitol to announce the formation of a political action committee, BikePAC.

February 22, 1986 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania's first Legislative Seminar held in Harrisburg.

June 12, 1986 – A.B.A.T.E. testified before the Consumer Affairs Committee in opposition to the mandatory seat belt law.

June 12, 1986 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania asked members to return AAA (American Automobile Association) cards stating that the association does not support freedom of choice for its members in the use of helmets or seatbelts.

September 13, 1986 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania participates in a nationwide Ride for Liberty to raise funds for the statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Foundation. A.B.A.T.E. makes contribution totaling \$3,681.00.

October, 1986 – BikePAC issues \$4,300 in campaign checks to legislators who support A.B.A.T.E.'s issues.

May 21, 1987 – Legislative victory obtained with compromise reached on PennDOT's proposed motorcycle inspection sticker move. In a public meeting before the Independent Regulatory Review Commission, PennDOT issues a revised proposal to the chairman that reflected the wishes of A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania to be able to continue using a permanently attached plate to the left side of the motorcycle for the purpose of displaying inspection stickers.

May 1988 – Representative Michael Veon presented with A.B.A.T.E.'s Freedom of Choice Award.

November 1988 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania donates \$2,000 to the Motorcycle Riders Foundation and an additional \$2,000 to the American Motorcyclists Association.

January 1989 – Bruce Johnson, Fifty-First Associates assumes A.B.A.T.E.'s lobbying efforts.

February 1989 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania supports call for boycott of State Farm Insurance. State Farm blacklisted a class of motorcycles as uninsurable.

May 8, 1989 – Senator Clarence Bell receives the 1989 Freedom of Choice Award.

May 1989 – House Bill 152 introduced by Representative Lashinger states "No person shall ride upon a motorcycle unless their legs are of sufficient length to reach the foot rests installed by the manufacturer. Bill is opposed by A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania and later dies in committee.

May 1989 – State Farm Insurance drops blacklist of superbikes.

July 1989 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania publishes 60-page booklet entitled "A Case for Amending the Mandatory Helmet Law in Pennsylvania." Booklet is distributed to the legislature.

July 1989 – Surcharge added to moving violations to pay off debt left by the Catastrophic Loss Benefits Continuation Fund (CAT Fund). Motorcyclists were forced to pay the extra charge but were specifically excluded from receiving any benefits from the fund. A.B.A.T.E. opposes this legislation and immediately had a bill drafted to repeal the surcharge for motorcyclists.

October 1989 – Representative Michael Veon introduced HB 2015. This bill would exempt motorcyclists from CAT Fund Surcharge.

October 1989 – PennDOT recognizes A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania for statewide Ride Sober Campaign.

December 1989 – Motorcycle Safety Foundation presents A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania with the 1989 Alcohol and Drug Awareness National Award.

March 1, 1990 – Vanity plates issued for motorcycles. A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania lobbied for this issue since 1984.

September 1990 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania hosts the Motorcycle Riders Foundation Meeting of the Minds in Carlisle, PA.

September 1990 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania meets with Pennsylvania Insurance Department representatives to exchange views.

February, 1991 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania kicks off a new safety and awareness program called Operation Save A Life (OSAL). The program is designed for high school students to make them more aware of motorcycles on the road.

February 1991 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania installs Legislative Hotline.

July 20, 1991 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania offers non-donor cards to all motorcyclists for the asking. The card stated, "In case of death absolutely none of my body parts may be used for any medical purpose in any state with a mandatory motorcycle helmet law in effect."

January 1992 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania investigates vehicular detectors at intersections. Some are not picking up motorcycles. A.B.A.T.E. works with PennDOT and problem corrected in most areas.

April 16, 1992 – Governor Robert Casey signs HB 1549 removing motorcyclists from CAT Fund Surcharges on moving violations.

June 11, 1992 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania begins campaign to reduce tolls for motorcyclists using the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

October 1992 – Pennsylvania recognizes the role that motorcycles play in reducing traffic congestion by opening high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to motorcycle riders.

November 1992 – Representative Anthony Melio introduces House Bill 1983. This legislation would ban any passenger under the age of 7 from riding on a motorcycle. Bill is opposed by A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania and dies in Committee.

July 1994 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania inducts Senator Roy Afflerbach as the first charter member of the A.B.A.T.E. Biker Hall of Fame.

November 1994 – Robert Evans of Reading is presented with the first handicapped motorcycle registration decal. Recognition of handicapped motorcyclists has been sought by A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania for several years.

February 2, 1995 – The House Transportation Committee overwhelmingly approved a bill sponsored by Representative John Wozniak that would increase speed limit on certain rural interstate highways for automobiles and motorcycles from 55 to 65 MPH. This is a bill that A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania had long supported.

February 1995 – Sturm, Ruger and Company, Inc. adopted a policy that discriminated against motorcyclist in their medical benefit program for employees. The plan has a provision that refuses coverage to employees who are injured in motorcycle accidents if they are not wearing a helmet at the time of the accident. At an informal meeting at the A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania Leadership and Legislative Seminar, the AMA, MRF and A.B.A.T.E.'s of Illinois and Pennsylvania devised a program called "Riding Ruger."

May 1995 – Pennsylvania Legislators cosponsor Federal Bills – Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum cosponsored Senate Bill 388 to repeal the penalty provisions of ISTEA. Congressmen Fox, Clinger and Weldon also cosponsors HR 899 which also would repeal ISTEA penalties.

June 13, 1995 – A.B.A.T.E. attends signing of bill by Governor Tom Ridge increasing the speed limit to 65 MPH on certain rural interstate highways.

July 12, 1995 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania entered a new era in communications with the state government in Harrisburg. Representatives of A.B.A.T.E. along with representatives of the AMA, MRF and BikePAC met with Governor Tom Ridge and Assistant Secretary of Transportation Ryan in the Governors office to discuss helmet repeal and other related motorcycling issues.

November 1995 – According to the Law Offices of Gray, Miller, Patterson and Cody of Lancaster, PA the Court of Common Pleas of Lancaster County issued a precedent-setting opinion on November 13, 1995, that in effect, prevents the Commonwealth of PA from prosecuting wearers of so-called novelty or “beanie” helmets under statute which requires motorcycle operators to wear “approved headgear.”

February 1996 – Representative Anthony Melio again introduces a bill – HB 2193 that makes it illegal to carry a passenger under the age of 7 on a motorcycle. A.B.A.T.E. again opposed this legislation and the bill died in committee.

May 1996 – Legislation was introduced by Senator Gib Armstrong to make the state’s motorcycle safety program mandatory for all riders. A.B.A.T.E. opposed this legislation. The bill was defeated in the Senate Transportation Committee on May 21, 1996 by a vote of 6 nays to 5 yeas.

A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania is joined at its annual Motorcyclists Rights Rally by Governor Tom Ridge and US Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado.

June 18, 1996 – The Senate in a 27-22 vote passed a bill that would make helmet wearing voluntary for people 21 years of age or older.

February 1997 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania sends representatives to Washington DC to participate in the AMA Introduction to Washington – A Freedom Fighters Guide to Working the System.

April 1997 – BikePAC reaches the \$100,000 mark in contributions to campaigns of motorcycle friendly legislators.

May 13, 1997 – Senate Transportation Committee approves Senate Bill 516, Senator Bell’s helmet repeal initiative, on a vote of 10 yeas to 2 nays.

September 29, 1997 – Pennsylvania came within one step of the State Legislature reversing their twenty nine year old mandatory helmet law when the House of Representatives voted by a two-thirds margin to attach a helmet amendment to a Senate bill being debated on the House floor.

The House voted 134-63 to amend Senate Bill 279, an innocuous Senate approved bill renaming a bridge, to include language from Representative Teresa Brown’s HB 43, a bill to allow motorcyclists the right to decide on helmet use. The House then voted 163-35 to approve the amended SB 279 and return it to the Senate for a concurrence vote.

November 23, 1998 – The Pennsylvania Senate approved legislation to repeal Pennsylvania’s mandatory motorcycle helmet law for experienced adult riders 21 years of age or older.

December 23, 1998 – Governor Tom Ridge vetoes Senate Bill 279 but in a curious twist said that he would support legislation that provided for voluntary helmet use if it maintained the current mandate for protective eye wear. The bill that he vetoed repealed both the helmet and eyewear mandates.

In the month long period between Senate approval of the repeal bill and the Governor's veto, more than 5,000 letters had been received by the Governor with a majority urging the Governor's support for helmet repeal.

March 22, 1999 – Representative David Argall introduced legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation because of “motorcycle ownership or operation or the wearing of clothing associated with motorcycle ownership or operation except when such clothing is obscene.” House Bill 970 was introduced with 25 cosponsors. This legislation died in committee.

April 21, 1999 – In an attempt to correct the flaw in Senate Bill 279 of the last session and return it to the Governor for his approval, we fell short on a Senate vote (Senate Bill 241) when two Senators, Brightbill and Rhoades, who had been previous cosponsors voted against the measure.

September 2000 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania hires Charles Umbenhauer as a second lobbyist to represent the organization in Harrisburg.

September 22, 2001 – ABATE of Pennsylvania's fundraising ride, to aid in the restoration and continuing preservation of Pennsylvania's Civil War Monuments at Gettysburg, was a capital success. 265 riders presented Representative Harry Readshaw a check in the amount of \$7,659.

May 6, 2002 – During its annual May rally in the capitol rotunda to support May as Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month, A.B.A.T.E. announced it will be making a Scholarship Grant available to honor one of the organizations staunchest supporters, Senator Clarence D. Bell (R-Delaware).

October 4, 2002 – A.B.A.T.E. today hailed Governor Schweiker's signature on Act 114, a measure that substantially increases funding for Pennsylvania's motorcycle safety program as “the best possible way to prevent motorcycling accidents, injuries and deaths on Pennsylvania's roads and highways.” The legislation increased the surcharge on motorcycle learner's permits and driver's licenses from \$2 to \$5 annually.

October 4, 2002 – Senate Bill 238, that included a provision that would enable two or more motorcycles to park within the same parking space without the risk of being arbitrarily ticketed was approved by the Governor and became part of Act 123.

October 4, 2002 – In the final hours of the legislative session, House Bill 1553 was signed in both Houses and sent to the Governor for his consideration. House Bill 1553 introduced by Representative Civera removes any restriction on handlebar height and also contains the Scrimenti lights on language amended by A.B.A.T.E.

The handlebar height restriction and amended lights on provision were later added to House Bill 152 that also passed both Houses and was sent to the Governor for his consideration. The Governor signed this into law.

November 11, 2002 – A.B.A.T.E. received recognition for its support of rider education from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) at the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program's annual banquet. The Special Achievement Award was presented to A.B.A.T.E. by MSF president Tim Buche who flew in from California to attend the event.

In addition to the award given to A.B.A.T.E. Mr. Buche also presented Special Achievement Award plaques recognizing the individual efforts of Joe Dickey, A.B.A.T.E. state coordinator, and Charles Umbenhauer, A.B.A.T.E. lobbyist for their “extraordinary effort to improve funding for the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program.”

November 21, 2002 – A.B.A.T.E. met with representatives of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. The PTC informed A.B.A.T.E. that starting in June 2003 motorcycles using the PA Turnpike and taking advantage of the EZ Pass will be given a 25 % discount on tolls.

June 16, 2003 – Senate Bill 259, a bill to modify Pennsylvania's mandatory helmet law passed the full Senate by a vote of 29 yea to 20 nay.

July 1, 2003 – The House of Representatives passed Senate Bill 259 by a vote of 118 yea to 70 nay.

July 6, 2003 – Governor Ed Rendell signs SB 259, Act 10 of 2003 which goes into effect September 4, 2003 allowing motorcyclists 21 years of age or older who have been licensed to operate a motorcycle for at least 2 years or have completed Pennsylvania's motorcycle rider safety course to choose whether to wear a helmet while operating a motorcycle.

September 4, 2003 – Pennsylvania motorcyclists can now legally make a choice in helmet use.

June 30, 2004 – Senator Bob Robbins joined veterans, motorcyclists, state officials and other legislators to unveil the first Pennsylvania motorcycle license plate for military veterans.

August 25, 2005 – The Department of Transportation endorses Operation Save A Life video and will make it available to Driver Education instructors to integrate into their Driver Education Program as they deem appropriate.

December 8, 2005 – Governor Ed Rendell signs House Bill 873 that increases the penalties for careless driving offenses that kill or seriously injure others.

May 24, 2006 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania makes presentation on traffic light sensor sensitivity for motorcyclists during an informational meeting of the House Transportation Committee held in Altoona. PennDOT thanked A.B.A.T.E. for conducting a road test of motorcycle detection at various signalized intersections in the area.

June 29, 2006 – Governor Ed Rendell signs House Bill 901, sponsored by Representative Kerry Benninghoff, amending the Vehicle Code to allow for auxiliary lighting on motorcycles. The bill allows blue dot illumination, standard bulb running lights and light emitting diode (LED) pods and strips to be added to a motorcycle to protect the driver. The bill passed the House 196-0 and the Senate 50-0.

January 10, 2007 – Senator Connie Williams offers legislation that would require motorcyclists that choose to ride without a helmet to carry a minimum level of medical insurance. A.B.A.T.E. issues a Position Paper in opposition to the proposed legislation and the bill dies in committee.

March 29, 2007 – Representative Dan Frankel and ten cosponsors introduce House Bill 945, a bill to reinstate the mandatory helmet law for all motorcyclists. A.B.A.T.E. opposes the legislation and the bill dies in committee.

November 14, 2007 – State Representatives Tim Solobay and Joe Markosek, Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, joined with representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to unveil a new motorcycle license plate for people with disabilities. The plate will replace the disability decal currently used by motorcyclists.

May 6, 2008 – The Motorcycle Safety Steering Committee, made up of A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania representatives and PennDOT officials meet to discuss various motorcycle safety and awareness issues.

April 13, 2009 – Representative Dan Frankel and eight cosponsors introduce House Bill 1253, a bill to reinstate the mandatory helmet law for all motorcyclists. A.B.A.T.E. again opposes the legislation and the bill dies in committee.

March, 2010 – A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania yard signs declaring Look Twice Save A Life – Watch for Motorcycles becomes a cooperative effort by PennDOT, the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program, and A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania. PennDOT will be paying for the yard signs and A.B.A.T.E. will be in charge of statewide distribution. 40,000 signs were printed to cover 2010 and 2011 distribution.

September 27, 2010 – Approximately 400 riders participated in the 10th anniversary of Representative Harry Readshaws Ride to Gettysburg and brought in better than \$13,500 in donations, the most in the A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania's rides history.

January 31, 2011 – A.B.A.T.E. presents the Contributing Organization Award for 2010 to the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program. Dave Surgenor, state coordinator accepted the award at MSP headquarters in York, PA on behalf of the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program.

Date Unknown – A.B.A.T.E presents PennDOT with the Administration Excellence Award for outstanding leadership, cooperation and commitment to the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program, Live Free Ride Alive Campaign and overall support for the safety of motorcyclists across the Commonwealth.

May 23, 2011 – Representative Dan Frankel and seven cosponsors introduce House Bill 1583, legislation to restore Pennsylvania's motorcycle helmet law, along with two new bills. The new bills would require additional insurance for motorcycle riders who choose not to wear a helmet and provide for special motorcycle license plates for riders younger than 21. These bills are presently in the House Transportation Committees.

November 22, 2011 – House Bill 563 – Geist - this legislation amends Title 75 to limit the civil liability for property owners who allow their land to be used for the PennDOT authorized Motorcycle Safety Education Program. Governor Corbett signed the bill into law. This is the first legislation of its kind in the nation.

December 22, 2011 – House Bill 1399 – Perry – this legislation redefined the definition of a motorcycle to allow motorcycles to have more than three wheels, will allow the addition of two stabilizing wheels on the rear of the bike. Governor Corbett signed the bill into law.

In the 2011-2012 Legislative Session we have had the following bills introduced and as of this date are working on their passage.

House Bill 254 – Grove (R-196) and others – An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the PA Consolidated Statutes, making MSP course requirement for obtaining a Class M Junior Drivers License.

House Bill 1154 – Markosek (D-25) and others – provides for a course of action when a vehicle detection system fails to detect a motorcycle due to the size of the vehicle.

House Bill 1340 – Kortz (D-38) and others – An Act designating Harley Davidson motorcycle as the official state motorcycle of Pennsylvania.

House Bill 1652 – Grove (R-196) and others – An Act amending the Act of July 10, 2008 (P.L. 1009, No. 78) , known as the Biofuel Development and In-State Production Act further providing for definitions for cellulosic ethanol content in gasoline and for agency responsibilities and making editorial changes. Ethanol has been show to erode fuel economy, and cause serious problems in older cars, small engines and boat motors.

SB 1075 – D. White and others - An Act amendming Title 75 (Vehicles) of the PA Consolidated Statues, further providing for traffic control signals.

In Conclusion::

This has been an overview of just some of the good work A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania has been involved in since the organization was re-incorporated as the Alliance of Bikers Aimed Toward Education in 1983. It would be impossible to list everything.

Add to the above, yearly Leadership and Legislative Seminars, Motorcyclists Rights Rally's, Proclamations issued by the Governor each year declaring May as Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month, Lobby Days, attending committee meetings and public hearings, producing Position Papers and a monthly state newsletter. Add to the fact that our Political Action Committee, BikePAC to date has contributed over half a million dollars in political contributions.

At the chapter level there are charity runs for the March of Dimes, Muscular Dystrophy, Abuse Shelters, Humane Societies, Make a Wish Foundation and Special Olympics to name a few, plus all of the toy runs conducted yearly across the state for children.

You would have to say that as a member of A.B.A.T.E. of Pennsylvania you have been well represented not only in Harrisburg but throughout the Commonwealth. Well worth your yearly membership dues.