

HB 555 -- MOTORCYCLE HELMETS

SPONSOR: Burlison

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on General Laws by a vote of 12 to 2.

Currently, every person operating or riding as a passenger on any motorcycle or motortricycle upon any state highway must wear protective headgear when the vehicle is in motion. This bill specifies that this provision will only apply to a person less than 21 years of age.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this is an issue of personal freedom. Other states that have removed its mandatory helmet laws have seen an increase in tourism due to being attractive locations for motorcycle rallies and for those wishing to ride through the state without a helmet. States that do not have helmet laws have not seen an increase in healthcare costs.

Testifying for the bill were Michael Moeller, Freedom of Road Riders; Janet Jordan; Robert Britt; William Yowell; John Stouffer; Mark Roloff; Terry Cobb; Terry Willer; Adam Weber; Terra Hartman; Lynn Mathews McKenzie; Tim O'Connor; Scott McKenzie; Kenneth Lewis; Kerri Lewis; Steve Seidner; Lynne Adkins; William Duncan III; Amy Allmon; Ursula DeMess; Bryan Green; Brenda Green; Tony Shepherd; and Johnnie Smith.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that removing the mandatory motorcycle helmet law will be dangerous and will lead to an increase in serious injuries due to motorcycle accidents.

Testifying against the bill were Richard McCullough, Missouri Psychiatric Society; Missouri Hospital Association; Missouri Academy of Family Physicians; Missouri State Medical Association; Missouri Department of Transportation, Traffic and Highway Safety Division; and Michael David, Missouri Motorcycle Safety Program.