



GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI

JEFFERSON CITY

65102

JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON
GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 720
(573) 751-3222

July 2, 2009

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Herewith I return to you Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 202, entitled:

AN ACT

To repeal section 302.020, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof two new sections relating to the operation of motorcycles.

I disapprove of Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 202. My reasons for disapproval are as follows:

Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 202 repeals Missouri's 42 year old motorcycle helmet law for any motorcyclists or passengers 21 years of age or older, except on interstate highways.

Head injuries are the leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes. Without a helmet, a motorcyclist is 40 percent more likely to suffer a fatal head injury than a helmeted motorcyclist in a crash. [*Traffic Safety Facts*, National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, January 2008].

It is estimated that from 1984 through 2006, helmets saved the lives of 19,230 motorcyclists and 12,320 additional lives would have been saved had helmets been worn by operators or passengers. [*Traffic Safety Facts*, National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, January 2008].

In addition to safety issues, weakening or eliminating helmet laws causes a dramatic spike in the cost of treating patients who suffer injuries in motorcycle accidents. The State of Florida saw a 40 percent increase in the number of motorcyclists admitted to hospitals in the 30 months following repeal of its helmet law in 2002, with the cost for treatment more than doubling to \$44 million. [*Traffic Safety Facts*, National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, January 2008]. According to one study, it was estimated that the total cost to treat motorcycle accident victims who were not wearing a helmet is \$250,231,734

a year more than the cost of treating victims who were wearing a helmet.
[*Economic Impact of Motorcycle Helmets: From Impact to Discharge, Journal of Trauma-Injury, Infection & Critical Care*, 2006].

Ultimately the taxpayers must pay a significant portion of these increased costs. After Florida repealed its helmet law, 16 percent of injured motorcyclists admitted for hospital treatment were either under-insured or uninsured and the costs for another 21 percent were billed to either charitable or public sources, such as Medicaid. [*Traffic Safety Facts*, National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, January 2008].

In accordance with the above stated reasons for disapproval, I am returning Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 202 without my approval.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Nixon", written in a cursive style.

Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor