



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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MOTORCYCLE AWARENESS

House Bill 4762 with committee
amendment
First Analysis (2-8-94)

Sponsor: Rep. Robert Brackenridge
Committee: Transportation

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

According to the Michigan Association of Professional Insurance Agents, of the 3,189 accidents involving motorcycles in this state in 1990 most involved other motor vehicles. Though the state now has an education program specifically for motorcyclists which is funded via motorcycle licensing fees and course fees, no program exists to educate drivers of other motor vehicles about motorcyclists and their rights to share the road. Some people believe a program is needed to make all drivers more aware of the rights that motorcyclists have to share the road and how this right should be respected. Legislation has been proposed to require the state coordinator of the motorcycle safety education program (whose position was created by Public Act 187 of 1982) to conduct such a program by using various kinds of media (television public service announcements, mailings, billboards and the like) throughout the state, to be paid for by an increase in motorcycle licensing and indorsement fees, in order to help make all drivers more aware of and respectful toward motorcyclists.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to increase from \$4 to \$4.50 the renewal fee for a motorcycle indorsement for a three-year or four-year driver's license, and to increase from \$5 to \$5.50 the renewal fee for a motorcycle indorsement on a two-year license. (The act provides that a two-year license may be issued to a person who has been charged with 12 or more points in the 24 months preceding the expiration of his or her current license, had his or her license suspended or revoked, or who had been convicted of certain violations in the 36 months preceding expiration.) Fifty cents of each motorcycle indorsement renewal would have to be used to fund a motorcycle awareness program that would be created under the bill.

The state coordinator of the motorcycle safety education program (created by Public Act 187 of 1982) would have to conduct a motorcycle awareness program throughout the state using money raised under the bill, and could use various media (posters, billboards, public service announcements, and the like) to enhance the motorcycle awareness of drivers. Also, the secretary of state would have to post a description of the program in each of its branch offices in the state, provided by the state coordinator of the motorcycle safety education program.

MCL 257.312c, 257.314b and 257.811c

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Department of State says the bill would generate approximately \$50,000 that would be used to pay for the motorcycle awareness program proposed under the bill. (2-4-94)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Though a state-sponsored program currently exists to help educate motorcyclists about the dangers and responsibilities of driving these vehicles alongside other motor vehicles, no similar program exists specifically aimed at educating the general public about the rights motorcyclists have to share the road with them. Many motorcyclists complain that some drivers act indifferent about their presence on the road or sometimes are even openly hostile toward them in driving situations. The bill would attempt to address these problems by providing for the implementation of a publicity program, to be directed by the current state coordinator of the motorcycle safety education program, aimed at educating all drivers of the right of motorcyclists to use the road and urging them to respect motorcyclists whom they meet while driving. Also,

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the secretary of state, as the state agency in charge of licensing drivers, would have to notify drivers that such a program existed. However, by providing for the program to be funded through adjustments made to motorcycle license and indorsement fees, the bill recognizes that while the roads are free to be used by motorcyclists, they have been designed for and are primarily used by drivers of larger vehicles. Ultimately, the bill could encourage all drivers to respect motorcyclists as equal sharers of the state's roadways.

Against:

The bill duplicates a similar program established on the national level by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation in which Michigan currently participates. The Department of Education currently helps coordinate motorcycle "driver's education" classes held at various sites (schools, colleges, universities, law enforcement agencies) throughout the state.

Response:

The program suggested in the bill may be more effective in reaching all drivers (rather than just those who are required to have training in how to drive motorcycles) as it would require the secretary of state to notify people who come into its branch offices about the program, and because the program itself would utilize various media to instruct the general public about the need to recognize and respect motorcyclists on state roadways.

Against:

As the bill is aimed at educating the driving public about the need to be more aware of motorcyclists while driving, it should require the general public to bear some of the costs for the program.

Response:

Statistics show motorcycling to be a very dangerous form of transportation. Motorcyclists involved in traffic accidents usually suffer more injuries of a serious nature and more deaths compared to the number of these which occur, proportionately, to persons in accidents where larger, enclosed vehicles are involved. Thus, the general public is already forced to subsidize a portion of motorcycle accident insurance (such as through increased catastrophic insurance premiums) that is not otherwise covered by motorcyclists and their insurers. Besides, the fee increases suggested in the bill are not too much to ask of a group that has often requested more respect and acknowledgement from the driving public.

POSITIONS:

The Department of State supports the bill. (2-3-94)

AAA Michigan supports the bill. (2-4-94)

The Traffic Safety Association of Michigan supports the concept of the bill. (2-3-94)

The Motorcycle Industry Council supports the bill. (2-3-94)

Specialty Vehicle Institute of America supports the bill. (2-3-94)