



**NCSL**  
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## State Legislative Motorcycle Helmet Trends

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National Conference of State Legislatures



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### What is NCSL?

- Non-profit, bi-partisan organization of state legislatures.
- Members are all 50 state legislatures, 7,383 legislators and 30,000 legislative staff in 50 states, D.C. and U.S. territories.
- Offices in Denver and D.C.
- Among our goals - To provide legislatures with information, peer-to-peer exchange and research about policy issues, both state and federal.

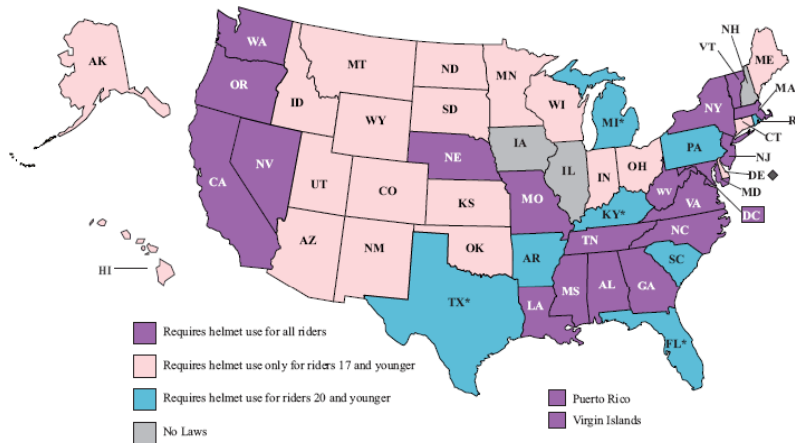


## Education and Elections

- 46 states have state legislative elections in even years (2014).
- LA, MS, NJ, and VA have odd year elections (new state legislators elected in 2013)
- AL and MD: Both House and Senate serve 4 year terms (all will be up for re-election in 2014)



## Current State Motorcycle Helmet Laws

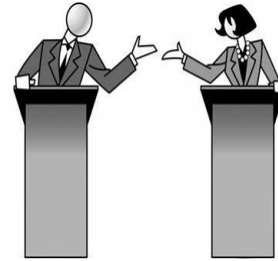


◆ Delaware requires every motorcycle operator or rider age 19 and older to "have in their possession" a helmet.

\* Florida, Kentucky, Texas and Michigan allow riders 21 years and older to ride without helmets if they carry medical insurance, and/or pass a motorcycle safety course.



## Debate on State Helmet Laws



## 2014 Helmet Legislation

- 11 states debated motorcycle helmet bills - none enacted.
- 9 states — Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Tennessee, Vermont and Washington — considered legislation to relax or repeal their universal helmet law.
- 2 states without a universal helmet law – Iowa and Maine – debated creating one.



## 2015 Helmet Legislation - Efforts to Relax or Repeal Laws

- 6 states – MD, MO, NC, OR, TN and WV – are debating bills with helmet exemptions for those with a certain amount of health insurance coverage.
- 4 States – MO, NV, NY and WA – are debating lowering helmet requirement to only those under age 21 or 18.
- Missouri debating 7 bills
- Nebraska – eliminate universal helmet law entirely.



## 2015 Helmet Legislation – Efforts to Strengthen Laws

- AZ – Universal law, but with exemption for those 18 and older who pay a fee.
- IA - Universal helmet requirement.
- NM – 2 bills. One Universal, and other would allow payment of \$692 fee to ride without helmet.
- RI – Would have to acknowledge on registration that operating without a helmet could cause physical injury and financial hardship if without health coverage.



## What are Legislators Saying?



## Legislator's in Favor of Relaxing or Repealing their Helmet Laws

- TN State Sen. Mike Bell: "It's first and foremost an issue of personal freedom for me."
- MO State Rep. Eric Burlison: "'At the end of the day, being on a motorcycle is an unsafe activity, but, until we decide that we're not gonna let people be on motorcycles, I think it's folly to assume that a helmet changes anything when the data does not indicate otherwise."
- MO State Rep. Warren Love: "We're surrounded by states that (do) not have a helmet law, if there's people out riding, they're gonna go down through Arkansas and journey around (us), and they're gonna bypass Missouri -- we're losing thousands and thousands of dollars because people aren't coming to Missouri because of our helmet law."



## Legislator's in Favor of Relaxing or Repealing their Helmet Laws

- WA State Sen. Don Benton: “I’ve heard from scores of riders over the years who feel they are in far greater physical danger because helmets significantly impair their hearing and vision – two things essential to the safe operation of a motorcycle.”
- WA State Rep. Brian Blake: “I think it’s smart to wear a helmet in most situations, but to me it’s a freedom issue and we still have an issue of some profiling going on. It’s my understanding that there are people being stopped by police under the guise of checking helmets.”



## Legislator's in Favor of Strengthening their Helmet Laws.

- IA State Rep. Mary Mascher: “Iowa is one of a handful of states that does not have a motorcycle helmet law. This law has the potential to save lives and reduce injuries. We have worked on this legislation for a number of years with little success.”
- Former Maine State Rep. Paulette Beaudoin “They say that they have insurance, but the insurance runs out. If you become a vegetable, who is going to pay then? People are going to have to pay for this.”



## State Traffic Safety Legislation Database

[www.ncsl.org/?tabid=13599](http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=13599)



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