

receive a head injury of any type as are helmeted bikers. Unhelmeted riders are at least three times more likely to receive a fatal head injury than those who are wearing helmets. Now motorcycle fatalities in Nebraska have run at the rate of 26 or 27 per year each of the last several years. Based on data from other states, we feel that we can show that at least 10 lives would be saved per year if this bill were to be enacted and that untold amounts of personal injury because of head injury would be saved if we could get helmet compliance up from 30 to 40 percent where it is now to 90 percent for the entire state where it would be if a bill like this were enacted. Now let me point out that the studies show that there is no data indicating that helmet use increases accidents by impairing vision or hearing or by causing fatigue or overconfidence. There is no significant evidence that helmets cause or increase the severity of neck injuries in motorcycle accidents. Indeed, the studies show that helmet wearers have a somewhat lower incidence of neck injury than do nonhelmeted bikers. Now the issue here involves more than just the freedom of bikers to expose themselves to unnecessary hazards. You should have all received by now a letter from Senator Sam Cullan who, as you know, is now a fourth year medical student, and in his letter, and I have got a copy of the letter here, he discusses his experiences treating victims of head injury motorcycle accidents in emergency rooms that he encountered during his third year in medical school, and he also thoroughly discusses the other social costs that are associated with serious head injuries. He points out that all of us bear the costs of individuals who become...who receive brain injury or receive death as the result of motorcycle accidents, and we experience those costs in the form of increased insurance premiums that are spread among all of us, and we experience those costs in terms of increased Medicaid costs that are imposed upon all of us through taxes, increased welfare costs to support a spouse or children if a spouse or children are left behind, and the other indirect costs that are associated with removing productive members from society. Now as Sam indicates so well in his letter, it is simply inappropriate for those who wish to drive motorcycles without helmets to force the rest of us to subsidize their health care costs, their higher insurance premiums, their welfare benefits, and the like because they are simply too stubborn to wear headgear when everybody knows it would avoid serious head injury in many cases. Now in conclusion, I would urge you to support this