

PRESIDENT: Fifteen minutes.

SENATOR HEFNER: ...I rise to support placing LB 524 on General File. I believe it is a good bill. I believe that we need to bring it to the floor and debate it this session. I also feel that motorcyclists must be properly educated and tested and protected. Now we do have another bill in committee, as I understand it, that would address the education problem, but we need to protect these motorists with helmets while they are riding their motorcycles. If this bill isn't allowed to be debated on the floor and passed into law, we will continue to lose our young people in a senseless and often unnecessary accidents with horrendous injuries that either kill, maim, and many times leave them dependent on the taxpayers for their care the rest of their lives. I can cite a few cases where some of these young people have lived for many years, in fact all their lives, in a condition that cost many dollars to keep them going, and usually the insurance isn't enough to cover this, and so the state has to pick up the tab. I don't have the exact figures what it cost but I know it costs many thousands of dollars. I didn't support the child restraint law or bill the first time that it was debated in this Legislature but I believe that it was Senator Shirley Marsh that brought to me a letter, and I forget what department it was from anymore, but it showed that it cost the State of Nebraska between four and five million dollars a year to take care of those children that were injured in accidents, and this convinced me because this is using hard earned tax dollars to take care of those children, the same way it was brought up when we was debating the seat belt law. We found out that the state was picking up any place from twenty to twenty-five million dollars a year and this is the same way in the helmet law. When we have to pick up those costs, then we should be analyzing whether it will save money for the motorcyclist to wear a helmet. I received a lot of letters from doctors, doctors who have taken care of those injured people that are injured riding a motorcycle. I have also received letters and I have talked to families who have lost a loved one in a motorcycle accident, and many times they tell me if only they had worn a helmet they perhaps would still be here today, and this is usually young men, young men who have most of their lives before them, that are just getting into life and would be productive, and could be good future citizens in Nebraska. And so at this time I