

Under pressure from a small but vocal group of people who ride motorcycles, the Michigan Legislature is considering a repeal of the state's all-rider motorcycle helmet law, which has been in effect for over four decades. Michigan residents, Governor Snyder needs to hear from you that you are against the repeal of this lifesaving and dollar-saving law.

You can help save lives and save dollars by helping to head off repeal of our current all-rider motorcycle helmet law. **Sign a petition asking Governor Snyder to veto any legislation that may reach his desk that would repeal or significantly weaken our state's current all-rider motorcycle helmet law.**

How can I help?

1. Go to <http://www.change.org>.
2. Enter (copy and paste or type) the following into the search field: Michigan Governor: Veto Helmet-Law Repeal to Protect Heads and Michigan's Bottom Line
3. Fill out the petition fields.
4. You may add a personal reason before signing the petition letter if you wish.
5. **SIGN**. The petition letter with your information will be e-mailed to Governor Snyder.

NOTE: Your signature to the petition will be publically displayed and you will be sent e-mails to keep you updated on this campaign UNLESS you uncheck the default boxes below your information.

Do I need to create an account to sign petitions?

If you are a first-time petition-signer on Change.org, an account and user profile will automatically be created for you during the course of signing your first petition; you do not need to sign up first. Then when you return in the future to sign additional petitions, Change.org remembers your personal information and pre-populates the petition signature forms for you.

Who will see my name?

If you sign the petition, your name and e-mail address will appear on the petition letter sent to Governor Snyder. If you uncheck the "Display my signature publicly" checkbox on the petition, your name will not appear in the list of signers displayed on the site.

What can I do to help this petition succeed?

The best way to help this petition succeed is to tell others about the petition and why you care about the issue. Forward this notice to your e-mail contacts and place it on your social media sites.

Information in addition to what is contained in the petition can be found at www.smarter-usa.org

THE PETITION TITLE

Michigan Governor: Veto Helmet-Law Repeal to Protect Heads and Michigan's Bottom Line

THE ISSUE

Under pressure from a small but vocal group of people who ride motorcycles, the Michigan Legislature is considering a repeal of the state's all-rider motorcycle helmet law, which has been in effect for over four decades. Michigan residents, Governor Snyder needs to hear from you that you are against the repeal of this lifesaving and dollar-saving law.

THE FACTS

1. **THERE IS NO RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHEN THE CHOICE AFFECTS OTHERS.** Personal freedom isn't "personal" when the public must pay. Repeal of helmet laws results in increased deaths, injuries, and costs to society. Consider the long-lasting emotional and financial impact of losing a loved one to an injury or having a loved one suffer a devastating disability that could have been prevented by simply wearing a helmet. The emotional toll on those who lose a friend or loved one in a motorcycle crash has a steep financial counterpart that we all pay. If our helmet law is repealed, the State of Michigan and its citizens will incur an unnecessary and avoidable financial burden. The motorcycle helmet issue is NOT a simple "it only affects me" or a simple "freedom of choice" issue. It is part of a much more complicated citizen-safety effort, and our best effort must include a mandatory helmet law covering all riders.
2. **THE CLAIM ABOUT LOST TOURIST REVENUE IS NOT TRUE.** A clever way to get legislators to consider weakening or repealing our lifesaving helmet law was to convince them that it causes the state to lose tourist revenue, but there is no evidence to support this claim. This false statement appears to have originated from a March 2004 document entitled "Economic Impacts of Modification to Michigan Mandatory Helmet Law," which Michigan ABATE paid Michigan Consultants to write. No governmental or independent, private research organization has completed research that supports this ABATE-perpetuated claim. The Michigan ABATE paid-for document is filled with made-up assumptions. The data and analysis methods are biased, the conclusions are based on faulty logic, the resources cited are primarily from special-interest groups, and the document was not peer reviewed or published in any scholarly magazine.
3. **WE CAN LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES OF OTHER STATES.** Helmet laws weakened in other states caused dramatic rises in the number of deaths resulting from motorcycle crashes. Motorcyclist fatalities following repeals of helmet laws increased 100 percent in Louisiana, 81 percent in Florida, 52 percent in Texas, and 50 percent in Kentucky. The increases exceeded the number of new motorcycles registered. Christopher A. Hart, Vice Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, said in his October 26, 2011, statement to the Michigan House of Representatives Committee on Transportation, "Unfortunately, these repeals have amounted to a vast experiment affirming the effectiveness of helmet laws and regulations in reducing death and injury."

4. **THE CITIZENS OF MICHIGAN OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT HELMET LAWS.** National and Michigan-specific surveys of the public consistently place support of all-rider helmet laws near or above 70 percent. A recent Michigan survey found 81 percent of likely voters support our current law. It is unjust for legislators to ignore what the vast majority of Michigan citizens want and to make their decision based solely according to the wishes of a small, vocal group of bikers.
5. **YOUNG RIDERS WILL NOT BE PROTECTED.** Partial-coverage, age-specific helmet laws like the one being proposed are not enforceable. When an all-rider helmet law is weakened and replaced with a partial-coverage law, helmet usage by all riders, including those under the age of 21 who are supposedly protected by the law, drops to approximately 50 percent. Elimination of all-rider helmet laws dramatically increases the severity of brain injury and triples the death rate of young riders. A universal helmet law covering all riders is the only method proven to be effective in protecting young riders.
6. **THE RESEARCH IS CLEAR, OVERWHELMING, AND UNDENIABLE.** Every reputable safety research organization in the world supports the use of helmets. Michigan's top health care organizations also support the use of helmets and have joined together to oppose the helmet-law repeal, including the Michigan Health and Hospital Association, the Michigan State Medical Society, and the University of Michigan Health System, along with many others. There is simply no logical reason to repeal our current law. The evidence in real-world crashes is so overwhelmingly conclusive that there is an ethical obligation to protect and ensure the safety of our citizens by keeping the current all-rider helmet law in place.
7. **HELMET LAWS SAVE LIVES.** Death rates from head injuries are twice as high among motorcyclists in states without all-rider helmet laws. Motorcycle helmets reduce head injuries by 69 percent and deaths by 42 percent. Repealing our helmet law will result in more deaths and injuries. Data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) show that Michigan's current law saves 25 lives per year per 100,000 registered motorcycles. Given that in 2010 Michigan had 266,722 motorcycles (Michigan Traffic Crash Facts), we can expect that as many as 66 more motorcyclists will needlessly die each and every year after repeal.
8. **HELMET LAWS INCREASE HELMET USE.** Research has shown that repealing a helmet law is likely to reduce the number of riders who wear helmets from 98–99 percent to approximately 30–40 percent.
9. **HELMET LAWS LOWER HEALTH CARE COSTS.** Unhelmeted riders have higher health care costs as a result of their crash injuries, and nearly half of those unhelmeted riders do not have private medical health insurance coverage. The financial burden for the treatment and care of uninsured motorcycle crash victims is placed on the government and the taxpayers. The CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control has concluded, "The single most effective way for states to save lives and save money is a universal helmet law." CDC data show that our current mandatory helmet law saves \$43 million per year per 100,000 registered motorcycles. Given that in 2010 Michigan had 266,772 motorcycle registrations (Michigan Traffic Crash Facts), we could expect an annual increase of nearly \$115 million in costs.

10. **SAFETY EXPERTS SUPPORT HELMET LAWS.** National and state safety experts support our current all-rider helmet law. Repealing or weakening our current mandatory helmet law would be a major step backward and would cut a huge hole in the state's overall traffic-safety program. It makes logical sense to support the position taken by the state's own paid experts.
11. **ALTERNATIVES ARE COSTLY AND INEFFECTIVE.** There is no scientific evidence that motorcycle-rider training or motorist-awareness programs reduce crash risk and are an adequate substitute for an all-rider helmet law. The elimination of risk exposure is not possible, so risk management, in the form of a universal helmet law, is the next best option.
12. **HELMETS DO NOT INCREASE CRASH RISK, NOR DO THEY INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF SPINAL INJURY.** Studies show that helmets do not restrict vision, interfere with hearing, or cause heat discomfort; and the most recent research shows that helmeted riders have fewer spinal injuries. Scientific studies of the largest national trauma database prove that motorcycle helmets reduce the risk of cervical spine/neck injuries by 22 percent.
13. **REPEAL WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH OTHER LEGISLATION.** It is not fair or logical to repeal a nonintrusive safety requirement for motorcyclists and not provide the same opportunity for automobile drivers to go without seat belts, boaters without life preservers, or hunters without hunter orange. Such action could be considered discriminatory and biased.
14. **GOVERNMENTS HAVE A DUTY TO PROTECT.** Governments have a responsibility to support citizen-safety efforts. Saving lives and saving tax dollars is a logical government responsibility.

For additional research and information supporting the use of motorcycle helmets and the important role of an all-rider helmet law in a comprehensive motorcyclist-safety program, visit the Web site of the Skilled Motorcyclist Association—Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders (SMARTER) at www.smarter-usa.org

THE PETITION LETTER

Dear Governor Snyder:

I urge you to veto any legislation that may reach your desk that would repeal or significantly weaken our state's current all-rider motorcycle helmet law. The current bill is SB 291. I am deeply concerned at the possibility of eroding Michigan's current safety standards.

The research is clear, overwhelming, and undeniable. Every reputable safety research organization in the world supports the use of helmets. The evidence is so overwhelmingly conclusive that there is an ethical obligation to protect and ensure the safety of our citizens by keeping the current all-rider helmet law in place.

It is my hope that you will heed the advice of the traffic-safety experts we citizens have paid to study this issue and that you will make your decision based on fact, solid research, and expert opinion—not on emotion, lobbyist-group desires, or false and misleading information.

Repeal of helmet laws results in increased deaths, injuries, and costs to society. The emotional toll on Michigan citizens who lose a friend or loved one in a motorcycle crash has a steep financial counterpart that we all pay. An unhelmeted rider killed or injured in a crash cannot claim that "it only affects me." Therefore the helmet issue is NOT a simple matter of "freedom of choice"; instead, it is part of a much more complicated citizen-safety effort, and our best effort must include a mandatory helmet law covering all riders.

Repealing our helmet law will place an enormous financial burden on the citizens of Michigan—a burden that will continue to mount year after year to pay for the additional costs. Motorcyclists in crashes are better off with helmets on. Michigan is better off with motorcyclists who wear helmets. Again, I urge you to veto any legislation that would repeal our current lifesaving and dollar-saving all-rider motorcycle helmet law.

Sincerely,