

Heads First

Saving Michigan's Lifesaving Mandatory Helmet Law

Heads First is a broad coalition of law-enforcement agencies, health-care practitioners, municipal leaders, insurance companies, and motorcycle riders and rider associations. Heads First took a strong stance in 2006 in opposition to efforts to repeal Michigan's 37-year-old mandatory motorcycle helmet law.

During a June 22, 2006, press conference at the capitol building, the Heads First Coalition asked the governor to consider the impact repeal would have on an already burdened health-care system, insurance rates, and a severely strapped state budget.

“Michigan's helmet law has saved countless lives over the years,” said Michael Dabbs, Chair of the Michigan Heads First Coalition. “For 37 years, effective public policy, zero tolerance laws, mandatory safety belt laws and mandatory enforcement have saved many lives, reducing costs for all taxpayers. In every state that has enacted motorcycle helmet law repeals, helmet use has plummeted, resulting in many more deaths and injuries. From a medical standpoint alone, this repeal makes no sense whatsoever.”

“No matter how you spin this, helmet law repeal represents, at best, blatant disregard for common sense; at worst, reckless endangerment of Michigan citizens,” said Dabbs. “We've forewarned our elected representatives that people will die and their answer, apparently, is: ‘Let them die.’”

Governor Granholm vetoed the bill.

*The Heads First Coalition includes AAA Michigan, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, Allstate Insurance Company, Brain Injury Association of Michigan, Center for Rural Emergency Medicine, Emergency Nurses Association, Emergency Nurses CARE, Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Hurley Medical Center-Trauma Unit, Metropolitan Hospital, Michigan Association of Insurance Agents, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, Michigan College of Emergency Physicians, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Michigan Nurses Association, Michigan Sheriffs' Association, Michigan State Medical Society, Michigan Osteopathic Association, Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning, Motorcycle Industry Council, National Conference of Black Mayors, National Safety Council, Nationwide Insurance, Prudential Insurance, Students Against Destructive Decisions, State Farm Insurance, **Skilled Motorcyclist Association - Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders, Inc. (SMARTER).***