

U.S. SENATE ACTS TO STOP MOTORCYCLE-ONLY CHECKPOINTS

Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in the U.S. Senate to prohibit the use of federal funds in establishing motorcycle-only checkpoints. S.2078, the "Stop Motorcycle Checkpoint Funding Act," sponsored by Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Ron Johnson (R-WI), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) on Wednesday, March 5th, and is similar to H.R. 1861, introduced last year in the U.S. House by Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI).

The bill would prohibit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) from issuing grants to states to set up checkpoints where motorcycle riders are targeted by police to check that their vehicles meet state standards for noise, tire condition and other requirements, and are also checked for safety gear during the roadside checkpoints.

Over the past few years, such roadblocks have been conducted in New York, Georgia, Virginia and Utah during large motorcycle rallies. The senators argue that these types of checkpoints are discriminatory and unnecessary since motorcycle riders are already subject to state registration, inspection, licensing and helmet laws and must stop at sobriety check points like all other drivers.

One co-sponsor, Sen. Manchin, former governor of West Virginia, says the checkpoints are a waste of taxpayer funding that can have an adverse effect on states' economies. "Requiring bikers to drive through motorcycle-only checkpoints is not only an ineffective use of taxpayer dollars, but it also raises legitimate questions about discrimination against motorcyclists. In West Virginia, bikers travel near and far to drive on our winding roads and enjoy the beautiful scenery, which attracts tourism and helps boost both our local and state economies," Manchin said. "As a Harley owner myself, I am pleased to work with my colleagues on this bipartisan legislation that simply would prohibit yet another senseless and unreasonable federal regulation which could harm states' economies."

The states of California, Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Virginia have all passed legislation to bar such checkpoints.

STATES RANKED BY MOTORCYCLE OWNERSHIP

With 8,410,255 motorcycles registered to 311,800,000 U.S. citizens, according to the most recent DOT and Census data that means that out of every 37 Americans you meet, one of them probably owns a motorcycle. But in some states your odds are better than others, and when you compare statewide motorcycle registrations with population figures, you might be surprised where some states stand in the rankings.

For example, Iowa comes in third with 18 people for every motorcycle, more than double the national average. In 2011 the state had 173,929 motorcycles registered, and a population of just over three million.

The second highest ratio of bike ownership is in New Hampshire, whose 1.3 million population shares 79,266 motorcycles, equaling 17 people per motorcycle.

First on the list is South Dakota with 12 people for each motorcycle, over three times the national average. In 2011 the state had 69,284 motorcycles registered, representing just 0.82% of all motorcycles in America, but its sparse population of 816,598 gives it the highest concentration of motorcycling in the country.

Rounding out the Top Ten are; Wisconsin (4th with 18 people per bike); Wyoming (5th/19); North Dakota (6th/21); Vermont (7th/21); Montana (8th/21); Minnesota (9th/22) and Alaska (10th/23).

The Ten Lowest ranked states are; South Carolina (40th/43 people per bike); Kentucky (41st/44); Hawaii (42nd/45); California (43rd/47); Utah (44th/47); Maryland (45th/48); Georgia (46th/49); New York (47th/56); Texas (48th/58); Louisiana (49th/67, almost half the U.S. average); and lastly Mississippi (50th/106, nearly a third the norm).

It's interesting to note that due to large populations, some of the states with the largest numbers of motorcycles finished low on the rider density list; California is number one in motorcycles owned with 801,803, representing 9.5% of all motorcycles in the U.S., but with a population of over 37 million it comes in a lackluster 43rd place! Likewise, New York with 345,816 motorcycles, and Texas with 438,551, came in near the bottom of the rankings.

It is also worth noting that only one of the Top Ten motorcycling states has a helmet law, while 6 of the 10 least bike-friendly states requires riders to wear them.

Support Wanted

Subject: The Freedom Fighter Reconnaissance Mission

An open invitation motorcycle patrol will explore the northern most proposed United States Hwy 45 Motorcycle (Harley-Davidson?) Heritage Highway of Honor on Friday, May 30, 2014. We will meet at Ontonagon, Michigan at 9:00 AM and depart Land O Lakes, Wisconsin at 12:30 PM.

Those riders will determine whether prominent locations, events and people should be recognized on this road. We will be searching for sparks of interest to help convince the Wisconsin Legislature to declare U.S. Hwy 45 a Heritage Highway of Honor.

That highway continues to Galveston, Texas. Wisconsin could lead the way for other states to help make this a "Route 66 phenomenon". A stop at Birnamwood to discuss the Vietnam Vets Motorcycle Club annual summer twister, which may deserve a historical marker...

We stop at Oshkosh for the 9th Annual Thunder in the Park festivities. See information included in the Free Rider Press. The Saturday June 1, 2014 Freedom Fighter ride: Registration 8 AM which departs at 11 AM includes VIP's:

Gary Wetzel, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient.
former Senator Allen Lasee, former State Senate President.
former Senator Dave Zien, Million Mile Motorcycle Man.
Tony San Felipo, first Freedom Fighter Hall of Fame recipient &

founder of Abate of Wisconsin.

The ride will explore these highways of honor, recognizing and making several important announcements about "Motorcycle Freedom Fighter Heritage":

Hwy 10 Vietnam Veterans
Hwy 29 World War I
Hwy 54 Firefighter/EMS
Hwy 151 Law Enforcement Highway

Invited:

ABATE of Wisconsin
Allied Clubs of Wisconsin
Federation of Wisconsin Motorcycle Clubs
Harley-Davidson and Motorcycle Dealers.
Wisconsin Associations.
HOG Clubs
Individual/independent motorcyclists

Yuppee wannabes and the mobility challenged becoming motorcyclists (MCBMC) can bring cages

The ride will take on a poker run type flavor but will be most informative and fun!

God Bless You, your loved ones and our troops.

Dave Zien

former State Senator, Million Mile Motorcycle Man

Deal of the Month.

"We are very proud of 'fog' and the quality it has reached!" den~~~

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