

News For Thought

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Motorcycle Bill Aims To Bring Equal Treatment In South Carolina

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley recently signed a Motorcycle Equal Access Bill that mandates equal treatment toward motorcyclists across the state in all public areas.

This legislation, sponsored by Rep. Todd Atwater (R-Lexington), amends the Code of South Carolina to keep local law enforcement agencies from denying access to motorcyclists on public highways, bridges, parking garages and essentially any publicly funded areas.

A lot of local motorcycle groups supported this bill, many feeling that law enforcement has not treated them right for a long time and they say they're ready for a change. "There's few municipalities, in particular, that want to stop motorcycles from parking in publicly funded taxpayer areas," said one ABATE spokesperson. "If tax payers are paying for a garage, then they should not be allowed to tell us we can't park there."

Under the bill, cities and counties have to make reasonable accommodations for motorcycle parking in lots and garages.

"All this bill is about is equal access, this is making sure that when you go to any city in this state that if you have a motorcycle you have a place to park," said the governor who is also an ABATE member, adding; "As long as I have been in office, ABATE has been my friends, and that's because they fight for all the right things; they've always fought for safety, they've always fought for individual rights, they've always fought to make sure that people have the liberties they should have."

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Save The Patch (Excerpted), by Spike

The familiar rumble and roar of a pack of bikes, which is music to our ears, may be a faintly distant tune in the future. The loudest noise on the streets right now is the buzz and the buzz on the streets is "SAVE THE PATCH".

'SAVE THE PATCH' is the culmination of many factors including decades of ever increasing discrimination and persecution to Bikers, their organizations and their lifestyle in general. We as bikers have widely been subjected to unwarranted highway stops, refused admittance into establishments and misrepresentation by law enforcement and the media. The U.S. Department of Justice last year filed a lawsuit seeking to seize control of the trademarked logo of the Mongol Nation Motorcycle Club LLC, arguing that the Mongols are a criminal organization and that the mark is used for intimidation; but the Mongols and their attorneys argue that the government is overstepping its bounds with the lawsuit, which they said would infringe on the rights of club members. "They're trying to destroy the right of men to associate and indicate their association," said Joe Yanny, an attorney representing the Mongols. "It's absolutely ridiculous. In addition to being a violation of club members' free-speech rights, more importantly, it's a due-process issue."

The lawsuit breaks new ground in terms of trademark law, the attorney said, adding that it may end up at the Supreme Court. Unlike a business trademark controlled by a single entity, the Mongols' logo is a "collective membership mark," and "It's legally owned by one entity, but held in trust for the members. It's the votes of club members that ultimately determined who is allowed to wear the club's patch."

Bikers throughout the state and nationwide identify with the message being sent out and the ramifications, if the patch is lost, it will affect us all. In southern California, widely respected members of all major clubs have met to discuss ways to save the patch. A Facebook page "SAVE the PATCH" has been set up since October and it states: "It has become time to further protect and defend our rights to ride, associate, and enjoy our lifestyle for all motorcycle riders and enthusiasts. To wear our respective clubs membership insignia, which have been trademarked

, copyrighted, and incorporated by these organized entities. Representatives from a few of these clubs in Southern California have come together to make the initial steps in presenting and organizing the support of all motorcycle clubs and riders to stand up and work to prevent the freedoms we all value and enjoy from being eroded further, by an ever more intrusive government apparently bent on tyrannical control, we all need to become involved and work to defend that which we all enjoy about our lifestyle, be it as a club member or independent riders."

The good news is, the passion to ride, the passion for freedom and the passion to preserve the life style is more than enough to unite the Biker world in whatever stance it takes to SAVE THE PATCH.

To contribute, make checks payable to "Trademark Defense Fund" and mail c/o NCOM, 7334 Topanga Canyon Blvd, Suite 200, Canoga Park, CA 91303.

Weird News: What's A "Biker"?

Do you identify yourself as a "biker," a "motorcyclist," or a "rider"? To some motorcycle riders, the terms are fairly interchangeable. To others, the terms are more finely nuanced, as the people behind the Oxford English Dictionary recently discovered.

Last February, the online edition for the Oxford English Dictionary rewrote its definition for "biker" after receiving complaints from motorcyclists. Riders took exception to the old definition which read: "a motorcyclist, especially one who is a member of a gang: a long-haired biker in dirty denims."

In a poll of 524 motorcycle riders, nearly three-quarters of them said the definition was inaccurate, while 60% said it was "dated and irrelevant." Another 21% had a more passionate reaction, saying they were "outraged and offended."

In response, the Oxford University Press, which publishes the OED, updated the definition to read: "a motorcyclist, especially one who is a member of a gang or group: a biker was involved in a collision with a car."

We're not sure that's much better, but then we don't represent ourselves to be the "most comprehensive dictionary of the English language."

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Mongols Refused Incorporation

The Mongols Motorcycle Club has been formally refused permission to become a registered incorporated body in South Australia. Despite claims by the club that it hosts recreational and charity events and that it was only formed because of its members' interests in American motorcycles,

Acting Liquor Licensing Commissioner Dini Soulio has refused their application.

Senior legal sources told the Herald-Sun newspaper that they believe the Mongols' move was largely tactical and aimed at thwarting the provisions of the Serious and Organized Crime (Control) Act should police obtain association or control orders against any members in the future.

SA Attorney-General John Rau has endorsed the decision, made on public safety grounds, to reject the Mongols' incorporation application.

A Mongols source said the club was considering a legal challenge to the ruling "in the same successful way as two previous legal challenges" involving anti-bikie legislation.

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