

# News For Thought

## Transportation chief calls for helmet use

U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters sent legislation to Congress on February 14th seeking to divert funding from rider training and motorcycle awareness funds to promote helmet use.

According to the Department of Transportation, the legislation submitted to Congress would allow states to use federal motorcycle safety funding to promote the use of motorcycle helmets. Currently, states are limited to using the funds for motorcycle safety training and awareness programs only.

In spite of a Congressional ban on the federal agency lobbying state legislatures in favor of passing helmet laws, Secretary Peters wrote letters to House and Senate leaders "seeking greater flexibility for states to target one of the leading causes of motorcycle deaths across the nation – riding without a helmet."

"Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters is requesting an amendment to allow the SAFETEA-LU Section 2010 Grant funds to be used to promote helmet use in a letter sent to President of Senate Dick Cheney and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi," explained Sputnik, Chairman of the National Coalition of Motorcyclists Legislative Task Force (NCOM-LTF). "This is nothing more than a raid on a fund that was intended for motorcycle awareness and education. Motorcyclists across the nation fought hard for many years to get this grant money and the outlines for its usage were hammered out and agreed upon."

Consider writing letters to your Senators and Representatives asking them to do the following:

1. Write Secretary Peters and request she withdraw her proposed amendment.
2. Speak with your legislators against this letter in an attempt to gather votes against this amendment if she does not withdraw it and it becomes a written bill.

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## Crash Absorbers invented for motorcycles

A new design of crash absorber can combat the type of accident where motorcyclists run into something and are then killed by the bike pivoting over the front wheel and

impacting on the rider. Iranian inventor Mohammad Hassan Shorabi has come up with a construction that absorbs some of the impact energy and transfers the residue of the impact reaction force to the back axle. He has incorporated the idea into a child's bike so it can travel as personal airline baggage. It comprises a strong construction that projects just forward of the front wheel and is able to slide down the main body of the bike as the various parts of it collapse, bend and break. Shorabi has installed it on two different motorcycles, and a friend "without mind" tested it by riding it into a wall – and survived the experience. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

## Colors sought for motorcycle museum

The Sturgis Motorcycle Museum & Hall of Fame is seeking vests with patches to expand an existing exhibit about motorcycle clubs.

"I'm looking to reach out to Motorcycle Clubs who might be willing to have their colors on display," said Christine Paige Diers, Executive Director of the Sturgis Motorcycle Museum & Hall of Fame in South Dakota.

"One of the exhibits we've had on display for the last six to eight months is an exhibit about Motorcycle Clubs," explained Diers. "As part of the exhibit, we had a number of vests with patches representing a variety of clubs. Unfortunately, the owner of those patches has reclaimed his collection. We're in the process of trying to rebuild the display and are looking for clubs that might be interested."

The idea of this exhibit is to educate the public about the history of motorcycling and present a fair-minded representation of motorcycle clubs in their many forms, she said. "I'd like to rebuild the exhibit with themed sections to display, including women's clubs, family oriented clubs, law enforcement clubs and veterans clubs."

Anyone interested in loaning a jacket, vest or patch, or even a photo, to the museum for a time period of one to two years, along with a brief club description or history, should contact her at [christine@sturgismuseum.com](mailto:christine@sturgismuseum.com) or phone 605-347-2001. [www.on-a-bike.com](http://www.on-a-bike.com)

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## Bikies Invited into Australian Parliament for Debate

Members of the Gypsy Jokers, Finks and Hells Angels were among guests at Parliament House for a February 8th briefing on new laws being introduced by the State Government to combat outlaw motorcycle clubs, and Democrats MP Sandra Kanck plunged herself into controversy by inviting the "bikies" to participate in the debate.

MP Kanck defended the presence of the outlaw motorcycle club members saying people who are affected by legislation should be consulted before it becomes law. The seminar was organized by Ms Kanck to highlight concerns the legislation will unfairly target people who are not involved in criminal acts, such as bikers who belong to the Longriders Christian Motorcycle Club who's homes have been raided by police during anti-bikie efforts.

Under the laws, scheduled to be debated soon in the House of Assembly, South Australians who have contact with bikies at least six times a year will face a minimum of five years in jail. The Serious and Organised Crime (Control) Bill 2007 also will enable the Police Commissioner, Mal Hyde, to obtain orders from the Attorney-General, Michael Atkinson, declaring bikie gangs illegal.

Anyone involved with the gangs, or who has any contact with them, can then be served with orders restricting their movements based on police intelligence, which must remain secret.

Prominent criminal defense lawyer Craig Caldicott told the gathering that the new laws were an attempt "to use a sledgehammer to crack a walnut."

"They are basically an overkill," Caldicott said. "It is the only piece of legislation in Australia aimed at a group of people who wear leather jackets." [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)

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