

News For Thought



Bikers Rally to Save Funding

When word got out that the US House of Representatives was considering a transportation appropriations bill in late July, and an amendment to eliminate funding for motorcycle safety funds was being proposed, the biker community rallied to the call and succeeded in saving \$6 million in grant money provided to 44 states for motorcycle safety programs.

After being reminded by scores of concerned riders across the country that saving lives is more important than saving a few dollars, the amendment by Texas Rep. Jeb Hensarling was never introduced and the Section 2010 motorcycle safety funds remained intact as the \$104.4 billion dollar FY2008 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill (HR 3074) went on to pass by a vote of 268-153. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Patch Ban at Sturgis Bar Spurs Boycott, Possible Legislation

A beef with a certain motorcycle club could inspire legislation to protect wearing motorcycle-club "colors," a state legislator told Rapid City Journal columnist Bill Harlan during Sturgis Bike Week. One-Eyed Jacks saloon on Main Street was boycotted during the rally because it is the only bar in town that bans motorcycle club insignia, and they even barred South Dakota State Representative Jim Putnam from entering while wearing the colors of his own dangerous motorcycle club, the Lawmakers.

"If this persists, I'll consider it," said Rep. Putnam, R-Armour, who sometimes wears a Sturgis motorcycle rally necktie during the legislative session. "Putt" is not only a long-time

motorcyclist himself, but is also a long-serving member of the National Coalition of Motorcyclists Legislative Task Force (NCOM-LTF), and anti-biker discrimination legislation is on their agenda.

Putnam added that legislation protecting motorcycle attire passed the state House in the early 1990s. It failed in the Senate, he said, but a similar Minnesota law has survived court challenges.

Now, Putnam supports a boycott of the saloon. "I'm not going in there," he told the Journal. But One-Eyed Jack's owner Ray Gold is just as adamant about keeping his new ban on "back patches," which he told the newspaper is to keep out the club, whose Sturgis headquarters is near the bar.

But the ban on patches also angered Louis Nobs of Hibbing, Minn., who was barred entry wearing his Soldiers for Jesus colors. "You can't ban patches for just one group," he said. "If you ban them for motorcyclists you have to ban them for bowling teams, the Knights of Columbus -- everyone."

Nobs is on the board of the National Coalition of Motorcyclists, and he helped distribute 60,000 fliers calling for the boycott. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Weird News:

A motorcycle was once plucked out of the Los Angeles sewer system. It's the largest object ever found in there! www.ON-A-BIKE.com

ChiPS Star Never got Motorcycle License

TV biker cop Erik Estrada has revealed he never passed his motorcycle test. Estrada played California Highway Patrol motorcycle cop Ponch in 1970s hit CHiPs, reports The Sun.

But he never actually had a motorcycle license for real. Estrada, now 58, had to hurriedly arrange a bike test when he was assigned to the California Highway Patrol for a new reality TV show.

And it took him three attempts to pass before he could appear on "Back To The Grind", a show that gets actors to try their TV jobs. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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Right to Repair Bill Introduced in US House

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) reports that the U.S. House of Representatives has re-introduced legislation that would return the right to repair to the vehicle owner instead of the original manufacturer. Thanks go to Rep Ed Towns, D-NY who introduced the Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair Act (HR 2694) into the 110th Congress. Joining Rep Towns as original co-sponsors were Reps G.K. Butterfield, D-NC; Anna Eshoo, D-CA; Steven LaTourette, R-OH; George Miller, D-CA and James Moran, D-VA.

The need for right to repair legislation has become apparent due to the increasing use of computers and electronics that control nearly every motor vehicle function from fuel delivery, braking, lighting, and emissions to entertainment. Although computers provide many benefits to motorists through improved fuel efficiency, comfort and safety, they also provide increasing opportunities for motor vehicle manufacturing companies to lock out access by car owners and the independent repair shops where owners choose to obtain service for their vehicles. HR 2694 would require that car companies provide full access to all tools and service information needed to repair motor vehicles, thus leveling the competitive playing field between dealers and independent repair shops.

HR 2694 is similar to last years measure (HR 2048); however some differences exist between the two bills. This year's legislation had to take into account several factors, including the new leadership in Congress and Committees. In addition, although sponsored by the sitting Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Joe Barton (R-TX) last Congress, HR 2048 barely limped out of subcommittee and failed to be taken up by the full committee or the House floor.

Dealing with the new Chairman John Dingell (D-OH), who has been extremely outspoken against this bill, is certainly a challenge. Dingell, who has defended Detroit manufacturing against the environmental lobby for decades, has had a change of heart. Now that the Motor City isn't the vast field of smoke stacks it once was, that change may be sincere. As the newest environmentalist, perhaps Dingell can understand that a well-tuned and maintained vehicle gets higher mpgs, is therefore better for the environment, and we should be removing barriers to convenient and proper vehicle maintenance.

HR 2694 now has eleven co-sponsors and has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce committee. No Senate legislation has been introduced as of press time. The MRF encourages you to contact your Federal Representative and ask them to co sponsor HR 2694. As always, the MRF will keep you posted on any developments.

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If you wear a novelty helmet when visiting NC you may want to get some more touring in before January 1, 2008. The reason being is NCGS 20-140.4 has been rewritten to adopt FMVSS 218. H563 is on the governor's desk in NC. Riding with non-DOT helmets will result in the same fine as no helmet next year. On the other hand you can always just

ride lidless let some of us... A index of WNC sights is provided today for those interested in taking advantage of the current less restrictive helmet law in NC.

I admit I thought about this one!

Ever wish there was a referee standing by with a whistle to rule on everyday minor traffic infractions? Someone to halt the flow of traffic for a moment to signal out a 'dangerous play'? Slap a few of these magnetic cards on your gas tank and the next time some SUV-driving, cell-phone-talking yahoo cuts you off without the slightest hint of consideration, you can toss one of these cards onto their rear panel. Shake off the frustration a little easier, knowing that your point has been made, and that you've substituted the conventional flip-of-the-bird for something with a little more substance. 2"×3.5". Pack of Ten is only \$3.

"In the realm of the biker world good debate is essential for good ideas to be brought forth." - Master Yoda

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