

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



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Rep. Gilchrest Calls for Universal Helmet Requirement in Connecticut

HARTFORD – Alongside doctors, motorcycle safety instructors, police officers, and motorcycle riders, **State Representative Jillian Gilchrest** (D-West Hartford) held a press conference with Head First-CT Tuesday to call for support of HB 7140, which would require motorcycle operators and passengers of all ages to wear a helmet.

“This is common sense legislation,” stated Rep. Gilchrest. “We are looking at a very clear public health and safety crisis that we need to solve. A universal helmet requirement would save money and save lives. The cost of not enacting this legislation is too great; the time to act is now.”

Requiring helmets for all was a suggestion that originated from Governor Ned Lamont’s public safety transition team earlier in the year; two proposed bills were raised before the Transportation Committee for a public hearing during this legislative session. One proposal would require helmets to be worn by motorcycle operators and passengers under age 21, while the other would require helmets for all operators and passengers.

According to Julie Peters, Executive Director of the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut stated in her written testimony to the Transportation Committee that motorcycle crashes in Conn. alone is estimated to cost \$157.2 million annually.

"We know lives and traumatic brain injuries are at stake and we know the taxpayers of this state are tired of footing the bill for what others insist is their "freedom" to choose. At whose expense?" says Garry Lapidus, Director of the Injury Prevention Center, Hartford Hospital & Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Associate Prof. Pediatrics & Public Health, UCONN School of Medicine.

Current state law only dictates that passengers and operators under the age of 17 must wear helmets. At the press conference, Chief John Gavallas of the Connecticut Police Chief’s Association stated that any law that denotes an age requirement is simply unenforceable – there is simply no way to tell the age of a rider or passenger when they are wearing a motorcycle helmet.

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