

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 435 -06

Honolulu, Hawaii
Feb 16, 2006

RE: H.B. No. 1899

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2006
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Transportation, to which was referred H.B. No. 1899 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE USE OF SAFETY HELMETS BY MINORS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to enhance the health and safety of moped riders under the age of 18 by requiring the use of a safety helmet when operating a moped on a highway, street, or any other public property.

The Honolulu Police Department and State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company testified in support of this bill. Street Bikers United Hawaii and a concerned individual opposed this measure.

Your Committee finds that moped use is increasing in Hawaii, in part due to high fuel costs. Although national statistics on moped operator fatalities are not available, national data on unhelmeted motorcycle riders indicate that those individuals are 40 percent more likely to sustain a fatal head injury than helmeted riders. Riders of mopeds, which are similar in nature to motor scooters and motorcycles, can expect to experience the same risk ratios when not wearing a helmet. It has been estimated that safety helmets can reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent.

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Your Committee finds that an exorbitant amount of health care costs associated with traumatic head injury could be avoided by the use of a helmet. Moreover, your Committee finds that there is grief to the loved ones of an accident victim when the inevitable thought of whether a safety helmet would have saved their loved one enters their minds. The use of a safety helmet very well could have saved that life, as statistics show that more likely than not, safety helmets save lives. Mandating the wearing of safety helmets when riding or operating these vehicles is a relatively small sacrifice of personal liberty to help prevent tragedies to families and our community.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Transportation that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1899 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Transportation,



JOSEPH M. SOUKI, Chair



