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## NEWS & NOTES

American Motorcyclist Association

May 2007

**The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA)** announced that bipartisan bills have been introduced in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate that would end health-care discrimination against motorcyclists, ATV enthusiasts, and participants in other legal recreational activities.

US Representatives Michael C. Burgess (R-Texas) and Bart Stupak (D-Michigan) introduced HR1076, "The HIPAA Recreational Injury Technical Correction Act." On the same day, Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Russ Feingold (D-Wisconsin) introduced identical companion legislation, S 616.

The bills seek to bar employers from discriminating against those who take part in activities such as motorcycling, ATV riding, skiing, snowmobiling or horseback riding in the health-insurance programs they offer their workers.

HIPAA originally prohibited employers from denying health-care coverage based on a worker's pre-existing medical conditions or participation in legal activities, such as motorcycling. But later federal bureaucrats reversed the law, writing rules to allow health-insurance discrimination against motorcyclists and others who engage in legal activities like ATV riding, or horseback riding -- employees were guaranteed the right to health-care coverage, but not guaranteed any benefits under those plans.

Motorcyclists were outraged when federal bureaucrats went against the will of Congress, and the AMA immediately lobbied legislators to right this wrong. Others involved in the effort include the All-Terrain Vehicle Association, the American Council of Snowmobile Associations, the American Horse Council, the BlueRibbon Coalition, the Motorcycle Industry Council, Motorcycle Riders Foundation, and the National Ski Areas Association.

Enthusiasts can send letters of support to members of Congress through the AMA Rapid Response Center at [www.AMADirectlink.com](http://www.AMADirectlink.com).

**Massachusetts** Governor Deval Patrick proclaimed the last week of March through the last week of April as the Commonwealth's Motorcycle Safety Awareness Period, to remind motorists more than 165,000 street legal motorcycles will be back on the roads, and to help prevent accidents and injuries.

Paul W. Cote, the current Legislative Director of Modified Motorcycle Association of Massachusetts, Inc.(MMA) and AMA Community Council activist, said most motorcycle/car accidents can be prevented by simply looking for a motorcycle on the road.

As a result of a \$15,000 grant from Plymouth Rock Assurance Corporation, the statewide MMA's all-volunteer membership has purchased and erected large "Check Twice --- Save a Life" motorcycle safety signs in more than 150 communities to remind motorists that motorcycles will be on the roads soon.

**Chicago** motorcycle and scooter owners will be required to park their bikes "perpendicular to the curb" -- or as close to 90 degrees as possible -- under an ordinance advanced recently to ease Chicago's notorious parking crunch.

The City Council's Traffic Committee approved the Mayor Daley-sponsored ordinance with the support of ABATE of Illinois and the AMA Community Council - Chicagoland.

The ordinance also calls for receipts spewed out by Chicago's pay-and-display parking machines to have adhesive on the back to accommodate motorcycles that have no place to secure them. Motorcycle owners will be asked to affix the sticky new receipt to the bike's headlamp.

**AMA Board of Directors** member and former World Motocross Champion Jeff Smith delivered the keynote address at the recent National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) Annual Conference. Smith, a British-born rider who won the 500cc World Motocross Championship in 1964 and 1965 riding for BSA, and who rode six times for the winning British Motocross des Nations team, talked about the early days of motocross, including some of his personal

experiences.

Also at the conference, held March 23-25 in Charleston, West Virginia, AMA Grassroots Manager Terry Lee Cook headed a session on "better grant writing." Additionally, Edward Moreland, AMA vice president for government relations, spoke at the National Association of OHV Program Managers Conference, held in conjunction with the NOHVCC conference. Moreland spoke about the AMA's support of NOHVCC, the importance of working together, and detailed the AMA's recently announced competition sound standards for both professional and amateur racers.

The combined National Association of Off-highway Vehicle Program Managers Conference and the NOHVCC Annual Conference is aimed at fostering open communication among land managers, recreation managers, planners, and OHV enthusiasts to create a positive future for OHV recreation.

**The Missouri Senate** Transportation Committee endorsed a bill to repeal the requirement for anyone 21 or older to wear a helmet. Younger riders still would need helmets. The measure cleared the House a couple of weeks ago. But it traditionally faces greater hurdles in the full Senate, where one or two opponents can stall a vote. Still, the bill is further along in the legislative process by early April than it has gotten in the past few years.

Supporters of the repeal, including Freedom Of Road Riders, ABATE for Missouri and the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), say it's an issue of personal freedom. The measure cleared the committee on an 8-2 vote, with some Democrats joining all Republicans in support. Now these groups are encouraging riders to contact members of the Missouri Senate and ask them to not allow a threatened filibuster.

**ABATE of Pennsylvania's** 30th Motorcyclist Rights Rally departs Shellsville VFW Picnic Grounds May 21, 2007 at 11 AM. The Rally takes place at noon in the State Capitol building -- Harrisburg, PA. A commemorative rally patch will be given to the first 1000 riders. Weekend camping is available. Contact the ABATE of Pennsylvania state office at 717-731-8955 or visit <http://www.abatepa.org/> for more information.

**The European Commission** (EC) eventually managed to obtain a moratorium on daytime running lights (DRLs) to be voted at the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle (WP29). Unfortunately, the position and interests defended by EC representatives radically defer from what was initially announced to the Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations (FEMA).

Following the EC's consultation on DRLs and FEMA interventions motorcyclists' concerns regarding the intention to introduce compulsory DRL for all vehicles throughout Europe seemed to have eventually found solid footing at the EC. Dr Stefan Tostmann, Head of the European Commission's Road Safety Unit, announced that the Commission would call for a 6 month moratorium in the United Nations vehicle regulations harmonizing process.

**Cullman County, Alabama** is buying 1,464 acres about 7 miles west of Interstate 65 to build an off-road vehicle park that also will accommodate horses and bicycles. The Cullman County Commission voted recently to give commission Chairman Wiley Kitchens authority to buy the land. The land has a price tag of more than \$1.7 million.

Sale of the land off Alabama 69 west of Dodge City is being handled through the Trust for Public Land. The county brought in the Trust, a nonprofit land conservation group, to negotiate the sale from private landowners, survey the land, and make sure there are no environmental or other issues that could affect a park locating at the site. Once the trust closes on the land sale, the county will buy the land and pay the trust for its services.

To help pay for the land, Cullman received \$918,976 from two Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs grants. The county hopes to get two more grants in the next two years to help pay off the land and build the park, county officials said. The county has to match the ADECA grants by investing 20 percent in money or services.

The park is slated to include trails for four-wheel off-road trucks and other vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, horses and bicycles. Genesis of the park comes largely from the work of Alabama Off-Highway Vehicle Association, AMA and ATVA members showing how the county might benefit from such a facility.

**A wide ranging group of European** organizations from all walks of life, which includes the Motor Cycle Industry Association, the National Farmers Union, the Agricultural Engineers Association, the RAC Foundation, the Land Access

and Recreational Association, the riders groups Motorcyclists Action Group (MAG) and British Motorcycle Federation (BMF) and the Auto Cycle Union have come together in a coalition to lobby against a Parliamentary Private Members Bill which seeks to force all off road motorcycles and ATVs to be registered and carry number plates.

The Bill, has been proposed against a background of strong public concern about the illegal use of motorcycles in public places by mainly young anti social elements of society.

The coalition strongly shares public concerns about illegal motorcycling but is arguing that new laws are not needed when riding a motorcycle illegally, particularly an unregistered one, in a public place can break in excess of a dozen existing laws. Instead, the array of existing laws needs to be enforced far more effectively than they are at present.

**The US Secretary of Agriculture** is renewing the charter of the Roadless Area Conservation National Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary on management and conservation of roadless areas. They will review submitted petitions and provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary. The Committee will also provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary on any subsequent State-specific rulemakings. This Advisory Committee will consist of up to 15 members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

For further information contact Bill Supulski, National Roadless Coordinator, at [bsupulski@fs.fed.us](mailto:bsupulski@fs.fed.us) or (202) 205-0948, USDA Forest Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Mailstop 1104, Washington, DC 20250.

**The Ohio General Assembly** Senate Bill 158 and House Bill 388 proposed additional penalties for those vehicle operators convicted of, or pleading guilty to, right-of-way, marked lane, or failure to maintain assured clear distance ahead violations that resulted in serious harm or death to another person.

The Ohio Right-of-Way Working Group, a coalition of motorcycling and bicycling groups, is seeking new legislation during the 127th General Assembly (2007-2008). Senator Joy Padgett (R-Coshocton) and Representative Jon Peterson (R-Delaware) introduce new legislation in the Senate and House, respectively.

The legislation proposes the following changes to the Ohio Revised Code covering right-of-way, marked lanes, and assured clear distance ahead violations: establishes a highway safety education fund, to be used ONLY for educational activities related to highway safety. A portion of any additional fines collected would be placed in this new fund; allows the courts, in addition to any other penalties already in place, to assess the following for violations that result in serious harm or death to another person; additional fine: up to \$500 for serious harm; up to \$1,000 for death; license suspension: up to six months for serious harm; up to one year for death; points on license: at least two, but no more than four, for serious harm; at least two, but no more than six, for death; and makes a citation for a covered traffic offense involving serious harm or death non-waiverable, i.e., requires a court appearance by the person receiving the citation.

We need your help today -- the bills need co-sponsors. Call or e-mail your state senator and state representative to politely request they become a co-sponsor. Visit the Ohio StateWatch area of the AMA Rapid Response Center or the Ohio General Assembly Web site to learn who your elected officials are. Use your own personal experiences and the talking points provided on the website to make your case why this legislation is necessary.

**AMA member and ABATE of Arkansas** officer Don Wesson was recently honored in receiving the Forest Resources Association's 2007 National Outstanding Forestry Activist award.

Additionally, Arkansas State Senator Jimmy Jeffress has introduced Senate Resolution 28 commending Wesson for this award. Wesson has been an active and vocal representative for the pulp and paper industry on many fronts for several years and proves that riders can work within the system to have a positive impact on agency officials.

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AMA Government Relations *News & Notes* is a monthly service compiled and edited by the AMA Government Relations Staff to keep motorcyclists informed of happenings around the world. We welcome your news & views. Please submit all material to Terry Lee Cook, Grassroots Manager, 13515 Yarmouth Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147; fax 614-856-1920 or e-mail to [cook@ama-cycle.org](mailto:cook@ama-cycle.org).

