

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 8, 2003

LB 303

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Erdman. Senator Byars, followed by Senator Baker.

SENATOR BYARS: Thanks, Senator Cudaback. Several people have asked me too relative to when was the helmet law passed, and we keep referring to 1989. It was passed in 1988, and so we can have a little reference, historical reference, to when that took place. I haven't weighed in on this issue at this point yet, although I think I'm going to support Senator Pedersen's amendment. We keep hearing those people in favor of repealing the helmet law refer to the fact that there truly aren't statistics, at least solid statistics, that really support the facts relative to the reasons why we truly should require motorcycle helmets in this state. I wish people would just actually be honest and stand up and say, I don't want anybody telling me I've got to wear a helmet and that's the reason I'm for this repeal. I think that's the honest thing. Because if you look at the facts, the true facts, statistical facts, empirical evidence, it is so absolutely overwhelming and obvious to me the reasons why we should wear motorcycle helmets that it's undefiable. But if you want to just say, don't tell me I've got to wear a motorcycle helmet because I don't want government interfering, I don't want you to tell me to wear a motorcycle helmet, okay, stand up and say that. I want to go over some of the facts, and these are facts that I think I can put my teeth into and feel comfortable with, and I think I can feel comfortable with the sources. And this is information that was compiled by the Nebraska Medical Association. I think typically we'll call them a fairly credible group. According to the United States General Accounting Office, typically a group we would trust some of the time, helmeted riders have up to a 73 percent lower fatality rate than unhelmeted riders, and up to an 85 percent reduced incidence of severe, serious and critical injuries than unhelmeted riders. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, helmets are the best evaluated way to reduce motorcycle deaths and injuries. They're 29 to 35 percent effective at preventing motorcycling deaths, and substantially more effective against deaths from brain injury. They also significantly reduce nonfatal brain injury. Again, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety