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FLOOR DEBATE

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compromise, and I do believe we have found one. And so, in the immediate sense, I want to explain what we're looking at as a compromise and, basically, Senator Beutler, his amendment seeks to remove the grandfather clause 100 percent, as I said earlier. And the practical reality of that, or the consequences of that would be jamming the training system with so much demand that we're not going to meet the spirit and the objectives of the bill. The reality of that would be thousands of people wanting it without the infrastructure to support that. And to give you a few statistics, last year the program trained just over 1,000 riders. And I believe that we have close to 5,000 trained individuals in Nebraska already. So the demand is there. The desire to seek more training is there with or without the helmet. And I think that that speaks well of the organization that is behind this. They are known as ABATE. They are the ones who brought the education component to the state. We would not have the current training mechanism without the advocacy group, American Bikers Aiming Towards Education, and they are a great group to work with that really see the positive side of more trained...a more trained ridership. So I want to point that out and also focus on the fact that we do have this compromise here that I'm proposing that looks like this. Instead of grandfathering everyone over 21 years of age at the operative date of that part of the bill, which is January 1, 2005, basically, it would only exempt those with an existing endorsement on their license. And I want to go back to endorsement because I think that was missing from yesterday's debate, in that already motorcyclists are held to a higher level of knowledge and ability than someone driving a car. Because they either take the two-day training course to get that endorsement or they take a special exam, written and actual outdoor exam doing figure eights around cones and exhibiting their ability to drive in a safe manner, whether it's reasonable offensive driving or defensive driving which is too often the case when it comes to motorcycles. But, once again, I appreciate the discussion on this and I think that we have some good things going here, and I plan to file this compromise amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Smith. Senator Beutler, on your amendment.