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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 303

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I'm torn a little bit with regard to this proposed compromise because certainly it's good in the sense that it would then require training for all who don't have prior experience on a motorcycle. On the other hand, if people, any person is not going to wear a helmet, then since that is a dangerous practice, maybe we should be absolutely sure that everybody takes the safety training course. One of the things that is troublesome about that amendment is that it doesn't go back in time at all, so that if you got a license 30 days before the effective date of the bill, as I understand the amendment, you would still be exempt from taking the training course. Maybe we need to say if you've had a license for two years or three years or had some very substantial experience, moving down that line of balance would also create the effect of having a lesser number of courses to give to people. But I would like to hear a little more discussion as to what the rest of you think about this particular question. I certainly don't have a strong opinion, one way or the other. But with regard to the number of people taking the course, the argument is that everybody who wanted a course wouldn't be able to get one very rapidly, and I'm not sure that that's the case. On the one hand, you know, this is going to be a free-market system. As soon as people discover that there may be a lot of people wanting the course, they'll rapidly expand the courses. I think the free-market system would quickly adjust to the situation. And I think it's also, though, important to remember that although you may argue that there are 35,000 current motorcyclists who would be eligible to take the safety course, and who might theoretically want to get rid of their helmets, it's also true that I know a large number of motorcycle people who have no interest in getting rid of their helmets, and who are not going to take any safety course because they don't intend to get rid of their helmets. There are a lot of people like that. Especially I think the increases in registration, a lot of them have been retired people and elderly people and a broader cross-section of people, where motorcyclists used to be, of course, the young and we always thought the dangerous. But it's certainly a more accepted form of recreation and/or transportation. So what I'm saying is I think there are a lot of people who are basically very cautious