

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

May 16, 2003

LB 303

and I don't believe that it's not...that it's our point in time to say let's repeal this law because it has worked effectively in keeping the number of injuries down and the number of fatalities down in the state. We've been on this bill for quite awhile at other times, and a lot of those statistics have been presented. And so it comes down to as what this article in today's Des Moines paper says: Opponents of helmet law blame older riders and more cycles on the roads. Safety experts say it...to discount...it's hard to discount medical evidence that helmets can prevent injuries. So you're going to come down to the issue of whether you want to side with the safety experts and the people from the medical profession, many of whom have written to all of you and I think I've heard from nurses and doctors and medical school folks, lots and lots of people who have a great concern about the health and safety of people on our highways. And it is our responsibility as a state to set those standards and we have standards in place. And now we have some people who want to ride without helmets who'd like to change this and I don't fault them for doing that. But I think we have a larger responsibility, as members of the Legislature, to set those safety standards. And those standards should be in place for the protection of people, not only protection for fatalities, but also for injuries which can be extremely serious in terms of head injuries to people. And I think we should respect the fact that our medical community in Nebraska has come forward on this issue, that the health professionals have come forward on this issue, and the safety experts have come forward on this issue. That's who...I know the individuals think it's an individual right, but we have lots and lots of restrictions that we, as a state, have put in place because they help keep our roads safer, not as many rescue...

SENATOR VRTISKA: One minute.

SENATOR THOMPSON: ...issues, not as many highway safety people having to work in terms of law enforcement and others, and also not having to deal with accident investigations and so forth. Now those may seem like a small thing compared to medical costs, but they are all part of our responsibility, as legislatures, as the Legislature, for setting the standards so people know what is safe. And this is not trying to be mean to a sector of