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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 303

insurance. And this is a study on the effect of Nebraska's reinstated helmet use law on hospitals; found that the acute medical charges for injured motorcyclists declined 38 percent after our law was implemented. And there are...there is information here I'd be happy to provide to anyone from a number of other states showing how the hospital costs declined after they put stricter helmet laws into place. It is our responsibility for the roads of the state because we, whether you want to say we own them or the taxpayers own them, if a guardrail is down, if a shoulder is washed out, if a sight distance is a problem, if proper signage isn't up, it's the governmental subdivision that gets sued. I was on a county board for eight years and we got sued a lot. And we usually prevailed, but when you...all those things are the responsibility of the governmental subdivision and it does, yes, the taxpayers own the roads, they are also going to pay for all those lawsuits. The responsibility is in between. It is our responsibility for the roads. And if you want to go to any court and they will say, who owns the road when a lawsuit comes down, it's not going to be the individual taxpayers. It's going to be the state government for the state roads, the county government for the county roads, city government for the city streets. And so there are responsibilities. There is ordinance power. There is other things that we put in statute to keep the roads safe and we, as a state legislature, set the safety standards for those roads. And people look to us for the safety issues of the state, and they...there are dozens of laws in place because that's our job. It is our job to set those...

SENATOR CUDABACK PRESIDING

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR THOMPSON: ...standards. And today we are just debating away to weaken the safety on the roads, and weaken it because a group of people who use the highways want the wind in their hair or whatever other reasons there are. Another senator said they want to, you know, ride free or whatever. Well, you know, it's not free for the rest of us. And we have to decide what the cost is going to be, not only in human life, but in human life with severe injuries, the cost to all of our medical providers