

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

May 16, 2003

LB 303

about cost of head injuries. Nationwide, the total economic costs for all head injuries approach \$5 billion per year in direct and indirect costs of medical, rehabilitative, and support services, and lost wages. For an individual, for an individual, one person, the lifetime costs for care of a head injury survivor are estimated to be between 4.1 million and 9 million dollars. In terms of acute care, the average hospital stay for a patient with a severe head injury is approximately 45 to 60 days at a cost of \$324,000 per person. And on average, the posthospital rehabilitation services cost \$125,000 per year, and may be required for several years. For many people that I know with traumatic brain injuries, this goes on for the rest of their life. I think that it's very apparent that the cost to the state for people who are not wearing their helmets is substantial, and I think evidence supports that. Is that issue enough, as Senator Thompson has said, for us to change public policy? Yes. Is it issue enough for us to maintain the public policy that we have? Yes. I think it's absolutely imperative. You look at another report entitled "Cost of Injuries Resulting From Motorcycle Crashes," published in November of 2002, it found that motorcycle helmet use consistently decreased the cost of medical treatment for motorcycle collisions. I quote from that study: These studies consistently found that helmet use reduced the fatality rates, the probability and severity of head injuries, the cost of medical treatment, the length of hospital stay, the necessity for special medical treatments, and the probability of long-term disability.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BYARS: And I have those sites for you to go to, senator, to verify this information, if you would like to do that. And I hope that helps you move to support of this amendment. I would also like to take a moment, and I don't have a whole lot time, so maybe I'll just summarize a little bit, relative to the reduction in deaths from the time that...to the years prior to the motorcycle helmet law going into effect and after it went into effect. I've heard on this floor before, and I think Senator Chambers might have even said this morning in one of his speeches referring to others on this floor, you know, if we save one life in this state, if we keep one person from