

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

April 19, 2005 LB 70

issues that are addressed in this legislation. And he's done a fine job of presenting the bill and crafting it for us. But having said that and having heard the evidence presented to us in committee, at this point I'm leaning against the bill pretty strongly. The numbers, I think, are convincing that if we pass this bill, the bottom line is, in my mind, we're going to have more deaths and more critical injuries as a result of motorcycle accidents. I don't think that can be disputed. I think the numbers are there to prove that case. There are many accidents where the motorcycle helmet would be irrelevant. The person is going 70 miles an hour down the Interstate and gets into a crash, that helmet isn't going to do him a whole lot of good. But there are many other instances where the helmet does provide significant protection, and it will keep a person from losing their life, or having to sustain a lifelong debilitating injury, because they were protected. You know, you can't go out today and buy a new automobile and tell the dealer, I'd like that one over there, but I'm trying to save a few bucks; I don't need the air bags and I don't need the seat belts. The dealer can't sell you a car in that condition. It's got to have the air bags and seat belts and a whole lot of other things that are mandated by law. And that's just the way it is. And in fact, many of you probably know, I have six children, and there are occasions when I need to place one of my children in the front seat, where there's an air bag. And it's amazing what you have to go through to get permission to have a switch installed in your vehicle to disable, temporarily, the passenger side air bag when you have a passenger in the front seat who should not be in a seat with an air bag. And there's a way of doing it. There's a legal way of doing that, and I've gone through those steps, and I've had that air bag temporarily disabled, where I can turn it on and off depending on who's sitting in that seat. But the point is, the vehicle has the air bags, it has the seat belts, and you can't buy one without it. And in my mind, the motorcycle helmet is very much a part of the equipment that is associated with the machine itself. Motorcycles don't have air bags. They don't have seat belts. But in Nebraska, they come with helmets. I think that's been a good law. I think a number of lives have been saved by that law. I think a number of terrible injuries have been minimized because of that law. And I'm very reluctant to change that law. I'm going to continue to