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FLOOR DEBATE

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whether it's hail damage on a house or a fender bender in the Safeway parking lot. That will affect rates. But I would look at the general policy of how motorcyclists are treated in the insurance sector, and you'll find that when they want to, they can narrow that cost, but they generally don't. When we hear the numbers being tossed about in terms of the likelihood of death without a helmet, are those studies reflective of the speed of the accident? Are they reflective of the blood alcohol level of the accident, other conditions of riding the motorcycle? There are all sorts of variables out there, and so far the most common numbers utilized by those who want to mandate helmets are the fact that we had X number of deaths before the helmet law and X number of deaths after the helmet law, which is misleading when you do not consider for the registration of motorcycles and otherwise. We've seen a high number of motorcycles in the early 1980s. It went down, bottomed out in the mid-1990s, and it's on its way back up. It's still not as many as 1982. Right now we're at about 32,500 registered motorcycles for 2004, compared to 1982's 47,900. And the bottom point was 1996 with just over 18,000. So we had half...less than half the number of motorcycles on the roads, conceivably, during the low point of fatalities and yet those who want to mandate helmets are using those numbers. It's clearly without fact, and we can do a lot better than that in our public debate here, and I would certainly rather look at raw data rather than something that is construed by those with a bias. We have a bias. I mean, believe me, I could prove to you that there's a bias by the number of letters that I...or should I say the tone of letters that I get from one physician in Omaha. Believe me, I do not look to him to give me an objective viewpoint, nor would I ever. But we're all entitled to our opinions and he's entitled to write me letters that, I guess, would do well to go through a Dale Carnegie Training Course. But we all have a bias, and I want for us, if we need to err because of our bias, let's err on the side of personal freedom with responsibility, rather than control, control, control. I mean, I've heard...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR SMITH: ...I've heard Senator Jensen say, well, you