

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

April 19, 2005 LB 70

with head injuries that wouldn't have happened if they had a helmet law. And is that a bias? You know, he makes the same amount of money whether that emergency room is full or not.

SENATOR JANSSEN: One minute.

SENATOR JENSEN: But it just...he's taken this on because he has a passion, because he's seen young lives, young bodies that were absolutely perfect except for a head injury, and what occurs from that point on. I support him, and I hope that he continues to write letters, not only now, but far into the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Senator Jensen. Senator Johnson.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the body, a couple of things here first. One is, I had a conversation with Senator Chambers after we recessed, and I found a few things that were a little bit pertinent to the subject. This is from the American College of Surgeons, Trauma Committee. Dr. Margaret Knudson is the chair of the subcommittee on injury prevention and control. She is the chief of surgery at San Francisco General Hospital, I believe it is. Yes. At any rate, Senator Chambers, here was the numbers that you might be interested in. Head injury is the leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes, and wearing a helmet is the single most important factor in surviving these crashes. A statewide study in California showed that motorcycle fatalities decreased by over 37 percent within one year of the enactment of the motorcycle helmet law. And there were decreases in both the number and severity of head injuries. The other thing here is they quote a study from Washington State that, although helmet...unhelmeted motorcyclists were only slightly more likely to be hospitalized, they were three times more likely to have severe head injuries, and nearly four times more likely to have severely head injured than the unhelmeted...than the helmeted riders. So if that's helpful, the numbers are there. The helmets might not be as good as what they should be, but you and I are both old enough that we remember football helmets made out of leather, too, and they are getting better. One of the things that maybe should come out of this discussion today is that we