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April 25, 2005 LB 70

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Jensen, followed by Senator Friend.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to reiterate a couple things that I passed out. There was...there's one organization that wants to eliminate the helmets--ABATE--and I can understand that. And they're saying what they want is, they don't want to eliminate helmets, they want freedom of choice, freedom of choice. If they choose not to wear one, they don't want to wear one. If they choose to wear one, they will wear one. Then you look at all of the other organizations that say that helmets should be worn. And whether they're the right helmet or not, by Nebraska instituting a helmet law, we have reduced deaths considerably, considerably, not just a little bit but considerably. So the handouts that we put out, 23 Nebraska organizations, which by no means is complete, they represent just a few of them; represent well over 60,000 individuals, those organizations. Remember ABATE, I don't know how many they represent, but there are 32,500 motorcycles registered in the state of Nebraska in 2004. Certainly not all those are driven on the road at the same time, but that's what the registrants are. Then in 2004 there was a survey that was done by a recognized organization, as well as AAA did a survey and their numbers were almost identical, and not only in District 1 and 2, where I reside, but in District 3. Seventy-nine percent favor maintaining Nebraska's current helmet law, seventy-nine percent. Boy, any time you can get 79 percent of the vote, you've got something that most of the people will certainly agree to. I happened to go Friday night to a medical function and the statement that several of the individuals came up to me and said, why don't you have a few of those senators that are proposing that we change this law come to one of our ERs on a Friday or Saturday night during the summer; why don't you have one of them go to one of the rehabilitation centers that we have? And they really felt that it would change things tremendously. You know, it's interesting, here the medical community, which you would think would say, hey, this is going to bring profit into our organization; we've got an ER, we've got doctors, we've got nurses, we've got bandages; this can