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FLOOR DEBATE

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same period. Fatality rates during the helmet law were 30 percent lower than the same time in '76-77. That's, again, indicative. Oklahoma, each year approximately 750 persons are injured, approximately 30 die, approximately 82 percent of the persons killed are not wearing helmets. Approximately 70 percent of the nonhelmeted persons die from head injuries, compared to 36 percent for helmeted persons. And the study of motorcycle crashes injuries conducted in Oklahoma in 1994 found out that helmets were 70 to 75, excuse me, 60 to 75 percent effective in reducing moderate, severe and fatal head injuries. Nonhelmeted riders compared to helmeted riders were 2.5 to 5 times more likely to suffer fatal head injuries, 1.5 times more likely to require hospitalization and associated medical costs. It goes on and on. Again, why are we doing this? It's to allow a few people, a very small number of people compared with a state population, to go without a helmet, to take a risk and to increase that risk even more by not wearing a helmet. They call it a right to choose. They call it freedom to choose, whether they ride or whether they don't. It just doesn't seem any reason to me why the state of Nebraska should embark upon repealing of a law that has worked, a law that has saved lives, that will continue to save lives and reduce injuries. Senator Thompson mentioned the injury that occur. We can repair bones. It's just amazing what doctors are able to do, and they can repair injuries and lungs and everything else, but the brain is one that has been very, very difficult to repair, and those brain injuries are long-lasting and even many times after the trauma, 15-20 years later, there are instances where injury will occur or manifest itself in a different manner. This is not the time to repeal a helmet law, particularly without a study. You got to remember, Senator Smith's amendment takes July and August of not wearing a helmet into the foreseeable future...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR JENSEN: ...without any time period, without any study, and I just think that that would be the wrong thing to do, particularly when August is the highest time of the year for injuries. Why would we open that window? Why would we open that door? I was willing to do it for one month, one year to examine the effects, and I don't see any reason whatsoever just