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FLOOR DEBATE

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to open that unrestricted for the years in the future of July and August. Too many injuries, too many deaths will occur; no reason to go there. With that, Mr. President, I'll return the rest of my time back to the Chair.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Jensen. Senator Thompson, and this also will be your third time, Senator.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. Last week the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration released a report showing that more than 3,900 people died on motorcycles in the United States in 2004, up 7.3 percent from the year before, according to preliminary highway safety numbers, and that's the seventh straight year of an increase in motorcycle deaths on U.S. highways, for an 85 percent overall rise since 1997. In fact, the American Motorcyclist Association spokesman person said that they are lobbying Congress for \$3 million for a comprehensive nationwide study of motorcycle crash data, something that would be very helpful to the Legislature given the rise in the numbers, but also Senator Jensen's idea of getting the numbers in the study is also critical. Because at this point in our history as a state, this doesn't seem the most...the right time to be setting us back in terms of motorcycle safety. A majority of the increased deaths occurred in people over the age of 40, and that's 60 percent. And someone in the article is quoted, that advocates safety, as saying, well, we thought if we just had younger people have to wear the helmets...you know, the argument was always older people have better judgment and therefore they'll be safer, and if they take a safety course or they do whatever. Clearly these numbers that are being released don't reflect that. That's...those people are dying too. I think it's more appropriate, first of all, that we have the study; second, that if there's going to be a national study of what's happening and why so many deaths are occurring, that we wait until Congress completes its study. And also I don't support this amendment adding two full months for a lot of reasons. One is that I think the one month was a concession by Senator Jensen to attempt to reach a compromise on this bill, but I did pass out to you the schedule for the Motorcycle Rally which is the impetus behind why we should be lifting this law, or one of the