

# MedChi

*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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TO: The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chairman  
Members, House Environmental Matters Committee  
The Honorable Pamela Biedle  
The Honorable Doyle Niemann

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise

DATE: February 15, 2011

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 250 – *Vehicle Laws – Motor Scooters and Mopeds – Protective Headgear for Minors*  
**SUPPORT** – House Bill 274 – *Motor Scooter and Moped Rentals – Protective Headgear - Requirement*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 250 and 275.

House Bill 250 prohibits an individual age 18 or younger from operating or riding a motor scooter or moped unless the individual is wearing protective headgear that meets the standards established by the MVA. House Bill 274 requires a person who rents a motor scooter or moped to provide protective headgear that meets MVA standards. The bill also prohibits an individual from operating or riding a rented motor scooter or moped unless the individual is wearing protective headgear. Both of these bills expand Maryland's commitment to requiring safe vehicle operation.

Maryland has long required the use of protective headgear when operating motorcycles. The cost-saving evidence is uncontroverted and extensively documented. Helmet laws save lives and money. For example, traumatic brain injury is the most common injury associated with motorcycle, motor scooter and moped accidents. Individuals with traumatic brain injuries often receive care in nursing homes, chronic hospitals, and State psychiatric institutions due to a lack of funding for community-based

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services. These services are extremely expensive and individuals are often underinsured or uninsured and, therefore, the cost of their care is borne by the public through uncompensated care. Individuals enrolled in the Medicaid program for treatment from traumatic brain injury also receive residential and day habilitation and supported employment services which are costly.

Cost savings alone is not the sole justification for the extension of the current helmet law to minors operating motor scooters and mopeds reflected in House Bill 250. Injuries needlessly suffered as a result of a failure to wear proper protective headgear produce health consequences which impact not only the future of the injured child but also the child's family and community. It is a personal and societal cost that is unnecessary. The reasoning applies equally to the application of the law to rental motor scooters and mopeds. Whether the vehicle is owned or rented should not be a factor in whether a helmet should be required. The cost of providing helmets to patrons who rent the vehicles is far less than the costs associated with head injuries that may result. MedChi urges a favorable report on both House Bill 250 and 274.

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