

# MedChi

*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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TO: The Honorable Maggie L. McIntosh, Chairman  
Members of the House Environmental Matters Committee  
The Honorable Norman H. Conway

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

DATE: February 15, 2005

RE: **OPPOSE** – House Bill 450 – *Vehicle Laws – Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders - Exceptions*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) which represents over 7,200 Maryland physicians and their patients opposes House Bill 450.

House Bill 450 proposes to create several exceptions to the State's current prohibition against operating or riding on a motorcycle without protective headgear. These exceptions include a three-wheeled motorcycle with an enclosed cab, an individual at least twenty-one years old who has been licensed to operate a motorcycle for at least 2 years, an individual at least 21 years old who has completed a motorcycle-rider safety course, and an individual at least 21 years old who is a passenger on a motorcycle operated by an individual covered by the other exceptions. In essence, House Bill 450, if passed, would "gut" the current law requiring protective headgear.

The prudence of the State law has been debated almost yearly since its enactment. Each year, the evidence remains overwhelming – mortality and morbidity attributable to motorcycle accidents is significant and the costs, both social and financial, are born by the victims and by the citizens of the State. The State requires the use of seat belts in motor vehicles to reduce the likelihood of injury and death. Similarly, the requirement to wear protective headgear for drivers and passengers of motorcycles, is intended to reduce the likelihood of death and injury. Enacting the exceptions reflected in House Bill 450 would virtually erase the safety protections afforded by current law. MedChi strongly urges an unfavorable report.

**For more information call:**

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