

## Senate Committee Passes Highway Safety Bill

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Today, the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation passed a sweeping safety bill known as the Motor Vehicle and Highway Safety Improvement Act (S. 1449). The bill passed by voice vote.

Earlier this week, Senator Lautenberg (D-NJ) filed an amendment that would have gutted the popular federal motorcycle education and awareness grants, known as the 2010 funds. The Motorcycle Riders Foundation is pleased to report that Lautenberg did not call that amendment for a vote. Due to an overwhelming response from the motorcycle community, the 2010 grants are safe for now.

Also under attack was the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) lobby ban. This law prohibits NHTSA from using federal money to lobby State legislatures, uninvited. The way S. 1449 was drafted, it removed this lobby ban. Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) introduced a number of amendments to maintain the ban and the necessary amendments were agreed to, by unanimous consent of the full committee.

The one sticking point that remains is at least, the least troublesome. That being said, it is still something that will keep the attention of the MRF lobby efforts. The trouble lies in a provision in S. 1449 that calls out motorcycle helmets in the list of definitions as "motor vehicle equipment". Previously, the list simply stated: "any device or an article or apparel... that is not a system, part, or component of a motor vehicle".

The MRF would like to thank all the State motorcycle rights organizations and everyone else who helped with this legislation.

The bill passed today will likely move on to be a part of the larger Highway Bill which could happen in early 2012. The MRF will keep you informed on this issue.