

President signs Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment Act or HIRE Act.

Washington DC Today, in a sunny outdoor ceremony, President Barack Obama signed into law the HIRE act (HR 2847) or as it's more commonly known, the jobs bill. In an increasingly rare show of bipartisanship the US Senate passed the measure 68 to 29, clearing the final hurdle for the President's signature. The House had passed similar legislation late 2009.

The bulk of the \$17.6 billion dollar package is tax cuts, hiring incentives, unemployment extensions, programs to help retain employees, cash incentives for businesses to hire unemployed Americans, tax offsets, and tax credit bond programs.

However, Congress used this as a vehicle to move forward a handful of extensions to some transportation related measures. Because SAFETEA-LU (PL 109-59), the last highway funding bill signed into law expired last September; the future of some highway safety programs was in question. The short term extensions to the expired law passed every month or two don't address various yearly funded grant programs and other safety measures. The Congress will continue to pass these short term extensions for the foreseeable future.

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) worked with the Congress to include the motorcycle safety program set up under SAFETEA-LU on the list of extended programs. The program that sends cash back to the States to be used only for motorcycle rider education and public awareness campaigns aimed at motorists. The program is fully funded for one more year. Details are forthcoming on State application deadlines and procedure, but will likely be similar to the past four years.

Last year, all fifty States applied for and received motorcycle safety money from this program.

"As the authors of the original legislative language creating this program, we are thrilled that Congress and the President agree that the program has merit and deserves repeating," Said Jeff Hennie Vice President Government Relations and Public Affairs for the MRF. "Considering that most States are currently using dedicated state funded motorcycle safety funds for everything but motorcycle safety, this law could not come at better time." he added.

The MRF will keep you updated on this and all other issues affecting motorcyclists.