



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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WAIVE MOTORCYCLE DRIVING TEST

House Bill 4514 with committee amendments
First Analysis (6-9-87)

Sponsor: Rep. Burton Leland
Committee: Transportation

H.B. 4514 (6-9-87)

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Under the Michigan Vehicle Code, anyone applying for the first time for a motorcycle "indorsement" on his or her driver's license must pass both a simple written exam and a simple road test. Applicants who are 18 or older and who already have a motorcycle license (or indorsement) from another state do not have to take the road test. But 16-and 17-year-old applicants must pass a motorcycle safety course in addition to passing the written and road tests before they can receive a motorcycle indorsement.

Motorcycle dealers say that 16-and 17-year-olds are discouraged from buying motorcycles because of a lack of availability of the required motorcycle safety courses. Last session, legislation passed both houses that would have allowed applicants less than 18 years old to get temporary permits to ride motorcycles without having first completed a motorcycle safety course, but the governor vetoed the bill. In an attempt to address the dealers' concerns, a task force chaired by the state superintendent of public education and consisting of representatives from the motorcycle dealers' association and from the Department of Education and Secretary of State had been meeting. The task force discussed a number of ways in which state resources devoted to motorcycle safety education may be used to increase the availability of motorcycle courses. In addition to talking about letting private organizations offer such courses (currently, only government units can offer motorcycle safety courses) and about the possibility of letting competent riders "test out" of the safety courses, the task force also suggested that state resources could be maximized if graduates of motorcycle safety courses were allowed to waive the motorcycle road test now required by law of every applicant for a motorcycle indorsement.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to waive the driving test requirement for applicants who have successfully completed a motorcycle safety course. However, the motorcycle safety course skills test would have to meet or exceed the requirements of the motorcycle skills test from the Department of State. In addition, the Secretary of State would have to inform the public on the availability of motorcycle safety courses in the area.

MCL 257.312b

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Legislation that would have waived the motorcycle driving test for applicants who had completed a motorcycle safety course passed the House last session.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Secretary of State estimates that the bill would save the state \$22,000. (6-4-87)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

In order to successfully complete a motorcycle safety course, a student must pass both a driving skills test and a written safety education test. The Department of Education, which is responsible for the motorcycle safety course content, says that the skills test requires at least as much skill as that required by the road test currently administered to all motorcycle indorsement applicants by the Secretary of State. Requiring successful graduates of a motorcycle safety course to take the road test administered by the Secretary of State is redundant and unnecessarily uses up the time of department personnel that must administer the road test to safety course graduates.

For:

Eliminating the road test as part of the indorsement process for qualified applicants would mean that more money would be available for increasing the number of motorcycle safety courses. Part of the fees from motorcycle indorsement applications is deposited into the Motorcycle Safety Fund and is used not only to administer the program in the Department of Education but also to help with grants to institutions and agencies which conduct the safety courses. Since the program began in 1984, motorcycle dealers have complained that their ability to sell motorcycles to 16 and 17 year olds has been hampered by the fact that while this age group is required to take motorcycle safety courses, these courses too often have not been either available or convenient. Making more money available to fund more of these courses would help ease this perceived problem. Further, the provision in the bill requiring the Secretary of State to inform the public on the availability of motorcycle safety courses in the area should also help alleviate this problem. If potential applicants get used to seeing information posted at the Secretary of State's offices concerning the scheduling of safety courses, they may become more familiar with the requirement before it is actually necessary for them to take the course.

For:

The bill would make the testing for motorcyclists consistent with the testing for applicants for driver's licenses. For several years now, students who have passed a public school driver's education course have not been required to pass a second "road test" for their driver's license.

Against:

The Department of State's skills test serves a useful role as a double check on the quality and consistency of motorcycle safety courses. A school whose graduates are failing the department's skills test may be more likely to review and

upgrade its program. The department has experienced a failure rate of 16 percent for all applicants for an original motorcycle indorsement.

Against:

Last month, the House passed legislation (House Bill 4475) which would waive the motorcycle driving test for a person 18 years of age or older who successfully completed a motorcycle safety course. If that legislation is enacted, House Bill 4514 would be redundant.

POSITIONS:

The Secretary of State supports the bill. (6-4-87)

The Michigan Motorcycle Dealers Association supports the bill. (6-4-87)

A representative of ABATE of Michigan (a motorcycle riders organization) testified in support of the bill. (6-4-87)

The Department of State Police have no position on the bill. (6-4-87)