

Monthly Legislative Update for Chatham County CBA

April 2008

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State Issues:

- **CBA STATE Lobby Day is on Wednesday, May 28th** – Please attend if at all possible. There will be CBA members from across the state there lobbying. We will escort you and show you what to do and what to say. **I'll need to know who is going by May 15th so I can let their legislators know that they are coming.**

- **Lerner's Permit Bill (SB 375):** (A bill that will shorten the time a person has to learn to ride) We oppose this bill. The bill passed the Senate in 2007. It currently has been sitting in the House Transportation Committee since May 15th. **ACTION ALERT: Please send an email or letter to your state HOUSE REPs explaining why you don't like this bill (Please see talking points below.)**
<http://docskivnv.bravejournal.com/>

This bill will:

Reduced Time Available to Learn to Ride: SB 375 proposes reducing the time a rider can ride on a learner's permit (from the current 18 months to only 6 months). Forcing riders to qualify for motorcycle endorsements with less on-road experience, will only increase the number of fatalities of "licensed" riders.

SB 375 clearly discriminates against a minority segment of the legally registered motor vehicle driving population. If it is imperative to reduce the amount of time a learner's permit is valid, then these restrictions should include learner permits for all drivers – not just motorcyclists. This bill singles out motorcyclists and imposes more restrictive standards than those required of our four-wheel operator peers.

Forced Mandatory Rider Education: SB 375 would require riders under 18 years old, or with less than 2 years driving experience to successfully complete the MSF approved Rider Education program offered by the NC Motorcycle Safety and Education Program offered at local community colleges. This particular aspect affects us in our pocket-book. The current community college operated Motorcycle Safety Education Program student tuition fees are between \$100 and \$150 per class. The actual per-student cost of the program is supplemented by an annual "\$3 tax" on every motorcycle registration renewal in NC. This "motorcycle-rider-only-tax" pays the operating costs for facilities, staffing, and management of the program. The existing Motorcycle Safety Education Program is already experiencing difficulties meeting the current demands of "volunteer" students. Adding an additional "forced-attendance" population will certainly result in more back-log and delays for training slots. In some areas of the state, where slots are available, applicants must wait up to 6 months for enrollment in a scheduled course. The limited number of approved "commercially-available" rider education courses are nearly four times more expensive (\pm \$400) than the "motorcycle-tax-funded" course. To reduce the impact on our rider education program, it may take years for an appropriate number of adequate ranges to be constructed, and training seminars conducted, to meet the demand for rider-coaches and instructors. The immediate result will be more riders operating motorcycles without a license; thus, creating a sub-class of middle-aged, middle-to-upper-income, "criminals". The long-term result could be decimation of the motorcyclist funded program. The current Motorcycle Rider Education program belongs to the motorcyclists of North Carolina. Motorcyclists developed the program concepts, motorcyclists lobbied for the passage of the law authorizing the program, and motorcyclists pay for the program with a special "motorcycle-only tax" on motorcycle registration renewals. If North Carolina Legislators want to increase demands on the limited resources of the existing "motorcyclist-funded" rider education program, then they need to belly up to the bar and provide additional funding and resources from the state budget.

- **Register to Vote** - This is a reminder that the last day to register to vote for the upcoming May 6th primary election is **April 11, 2008**. If you are not already registered to vote, you may register in person at your county voter registration office or the North Carolina State Board of Elections no later than the normal close of business of that agency on **April 11, 2008**. You may also download, complete, and mail the voter registration application at: http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/NCSBE/VR/VR%20Forms/vr_forms.html. Completed applications must be **postmarked no later than April 11, 2008**. For additional information on the 2008 elections, please contact the North Carolina State Board of Elections at (919) 733-7173 or go to <http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/NCSBE/index.html>.

Federal Issues:

- **NO CHANGE - HIPAA Loophole** – We have already contacted our legislators on this issue. We will continue to monitor this issue.

Awareness is our best defense. Please stay involved legislatively.

Please read DocSki's latest blog entry at least once a week:

<http://docskivnv.bravejournal.com/>

You can also subscribe to the email alerts and receive an email every time Doc posts a message.