

Monthly Legislative Update for Chatham County CBA

June 2008

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State Issues:

- **CBA STATE Lobby Day was on May 28th** – We had FIVE members attend (10% of our membership). We visited with our legislators and voiced our opinion on the different pieces of legislation that affect us as bikers here in North Carolina. Thank you to those who attended.

- **NO CHANGE - 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 15, 2007.

- **UNC Motorcycle Safety Center Bill (SB 1121)** – We support the “Motorcycle Safety Center” proposed by Senate bill 1121 which would support the development and evaluation of a “crash-prevention” approach to motorcycle safety by UNC researchers. This was May's Action Alert. Did anyone, besides Vinny write their state Senator? Did anyone get a response? Senator Stevens says it will be reintroduced next session.

- **California Legal Defense Fund** - Chatham members voted against sending CA money at the May meeting. Vinny sent an email to Don Blanscet, Executive Director, ABATE of California and asked him what will be done with the left over and also asked him how many members ABATE of CA has. He wouldn't answer the membership question and said that every effort will be made to return the leftover donations to large (over \$100) donors if there is any leftover. (Don is also the Deputy Director of BOLT of CA.)

Street Gang Prevention Act (H274/SB1358) - We have no problems with the Senate Version (SB 1358) of this bill... The House bill is the one which criminalizes people for exercising their right to freely associate with others. When the House bill got to the Senate, it was amended and sent back to the House for concurrence. The House voted to "not concur" with the Senate's amendments to HB 274. The bill now sits in a conference committee comprised of Senators and Representatives to work out the items in dispute. Although the bill has gone to committee, there will be no committee meetings, nor public testimony. We have voiced our concerns. We spoke extensively last session and included it as an issue for discussion and on our courtesy cards for this past Lobby Day. All we can do now is await and see if they can work out an agreement behind closed doors.

Federal Issues:

- **HIPAA Loophole** (no change) – This bill makes it illegal for medical insurance companies to discriminate against motorcyclists when they get hurt on their bikes. We have already contacted our legislators on this issue. We will continue to monitor this issue. This bill currently has 104 co-sponsors.

- **FRANK LAUTENBERG, US Senator from NJ - BAD NEWS** – June 3rd Primary – NJ House Rep. Rob Andrews did NOT win so we are stuck with Frank Lautenberg for another 6 years or until the 84-year-old Senator retires. Senator Frank Lautenberg is the nation's number one helmet law advocate. Andrews has sworn to vote against any mandatory helmet legislation and to continue to be supportive of motorcycling. The MRF PAC donated \$2,500 to Andrew's campaign and I also donated \$25.

- **Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)** - VMT numbers have historically been voluntary for states to report to the feds. As of this month, it's now mandatory for states to report motorcycle VMT. The MRF feels this is advantageous to motorcycling because we are not being treated the same as other vehicles on the road.

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.

CC-CBA Members: Please give this article to one of your biker friends.

Are you a dog or a biker?

(Published – July, 2005)

If you are a dog, then your life is worth more to North Carolina's legislators than if you are a biker. That is also true in South Carolina.

In North Carolina, killing a police service dog is a Class I felony punishable by at least three months in jail. The penalty for killing a police service dog in South Carolina is currently \$5,000. The penalty for running over a motorcyclist with your car and killing him (her) in NC is \$25. I wonder if someone ran over a police dog by accident and said "I just didn't see it" whether they would reduce the penalty to \$25? I really doubt it. In fact I know they wouldn't because those are minimum penalties for killing service dogs. While I love dogs and feel for anyone who loses one, the value of a dog's life should never be higher than the value of a human life.

How can this happen? Why are these laws so "broken"? Why isn't anyone doing anything about it? Why don't bikers get these laws changed?

The truth is that there are people doing something about this. They call themselves "Bikers' Rights Activists". Usually about one percent of the motorcyclists in any state are bikers' rights activists. They usually belong to state level and federal level Motorcyclists' Rights Organizations (MROs). Unfortunately, since their numbers are so small, they don't get these broken laws fixed very quickly. It usually takes many years of them lobbying and writing letters to their legislators to get a law changed. They fight like hell every day to get these laws changed. They are a dedicated, motivated, tenacious bunch of bikers. But nevertheless, too small in numbers to get the job done quickly.

This is where YOU come in. It's a good chance that you are one of the 99% of riders who don't get involved in bikers' rights. If you are not already one of those tenacious bikers, then you should get off your "seat" and start being one.

The Concerned Bikers Association ([CBA](#)) in North Carolina has been fighting this \$25 penalty issue for several years. They are trying to get these penalties increased now. Unfortunately, the CBA consists of only about one percent of North Carolina's motorcyclists. Question: Why are CBA members doing all the work here when the benefit will be to all NC riders?

Do you care about your friends and families? How will your friends and family feel if you are killed by a negligent car driver and the police officer tells your parents, your spouse, and your children, that your killer will get off with a \$25 fine and no driver's license suspension? The pain they feel over your loss will be magnified when they find out your life is only worth \$25 to the state of North Carolina. The person who ran you over will walk with a \$25 ticket, and be driving the following day. "Oops, Sorry, I just didn't see him." will be their response. Your family will be puzzled. They will be madder than hell, and they will probably contact their local MRO and find out how this could have happened.

If you have never attended the funeral of a biker friend who was killed by a car driver, then maybe you don't have any emotional connection to these issues. Hopefully, you won't have to attend one before you get involved, join an MRO, and help to fix these broken laws. It doesn't take a lot of money or time. It just takes some desire. You can join a state MRO like [CBA/ABATE of NC](#) for about \$25 a year. Then you can join a federal MRO like the [Motorcycle Riders Foundation \(MRF\)](#) for \$30 (www.MRF.org) a year. That will be the best \$55 you have ever spent. It will also get you the newsletters and the contacts to keep you informed and involved in the efforts to fix these broken laws.

Protect your freedoms! Join [CBA/ABATE](#) and the [MRF](#) today!

Ref: NC Statutes: 14-163.1 (Assault on a police service dog), 15A-1340.17 (I class felony) Copyright NCRider.com