

Legislative Update for Chatham County CBA – Feb 2011

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NC State Issues:

CBA State Lobby Day was yesterday. Wayne, Mikey, Mohan, Cat and I attended.

CBA State Legislative Agenda for the 2011-2012 Legislative Session:

1. Increase the number of voter registrations in the motorcycling community.
2. Amend the NC right-of-way violation statute to increase penalties for car drivers to violate motorcyclists' right-of-way. (Create minimum \$200 penalty for no injury, \$500 for injury.)
3. Repeal NC's mandatory helmet law for adults. (30 other states have helmet choice for adults.)
4. Seek support for a bill which would prohibit discrimination against motorcyclists in all businesses and recreational establishments in NC (restaurants, hotels, campgrounds, etc.)
5. Enforce General Statute 20-141.5 to establish a uniform, state-wide, motorcycle pursuit policy for all law enforcement agencies.
6. Make highway barriers more motorcycle-friendly and safer. (Cable barriers increase injuries.)
7. Lobby against any anti-gang legislation that targets innocent motorcyclists groups.
8. Prevent discriminatory legislation targeting motorcycle noise emissions that doesn't also target all other forms of noise.
9. Seek support for the use of Department of Transportation electronic message signs (Amber alert signs) to deliver motorcycle awareness messages when they are not in use for Amber Alerts.
10. Defend against bills that are unfriendly to motorcyclists.
11. Support the elimination of the Insurance loophole that removes the right of someone to claims damages if they are even 5% at fault in an accident.

Federal and International issues:

MOTORCYCLE-RIDING CONGRESSWOMAN SHOT - In what has been described as a national tragedy, a deranged gunman opened fire during a public meeting with constituents by Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords outside a Tucson supermarket on January 8 that left six dead and more than a dozen injured including the state rep who was critically injured with a bullet wound to the head. Giffords, 40, rides motorcycles and married an astronaut at a wedding where everything had to be biodegradable. She is a centrist three-term Democrat who champions gun rights, lists fiscal discipline as one of her top issues and was re-elected in a conservative district when Republicans took control of the House. Before entering politics she ran the family tire business, which was founded by her grandfather in 1949. Perhaps growing up in an auto-focused family led to her love of motorcycles. She is a co-chair of the Congressional Motorcycle Caucus with Republican Walt Jones of North Carolina. In 2009 Rep. Giffords taped a video message encouraging people to ride their motorcycles to work, saying that she likes to ride motorcycles, but also likes that they leave a smaller carbon footprint than cars. She also sided with motorcycle riders who favor state legislation to ride helmet-free, as she does. Though early reports suggested Giffords was fatally shot, she miraculously survived being shot point-blank through the brain and her doctors are optimistic about her chances of recovery. The thoughts and prayers of America's motorcycling community are with her and the other victims of this tragic assault.

EUROPE TO MANDATE ABS FOR MOTORCYCLES - A European Union Commission has presented its proposal for new framework regulation for motorcycles. It plans to mandate anti-lock braking systems (ABS) for motorcycles with more than 125cc displacement from 2017 onwards. Although the first anti-lock braking system was installed on a motorcycle in 1988, only 16% of all newly manufactured motorcycles in Europe were equipped with ABS, and by comparison car manufacturers have made ABS standard equipment since 2004 which has contributed to a 49% overall decline in fatal car accidents in the EU. In the U.S., the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has considered requiring ABS on new motorcycles sold in America, and will likely take up the issue in the near future.

- **FEWER BUSINESSES SELLING MOTORCYCLES, PARTS & ACCESSORIES** - There are 10,428 retail outlets in the United States that conduct business related to motorcycles, scooters or ATVs, down by more than 25% from 13,973 such businesses in 2009, according to the Motorcycle Industry Council. These were the principle findings of the MIC 2010 Retail Outlet Audit, a summary of which the council sent to its members this week. The audit was completed in December 2010. The report broke down the total by the number of retailers that sell new major-brand vehicles -- 5,134, or 49.2% -- and the number of retailers not selling new vehicles, but specializing in parts, accessories, apparel, used vehicles or service: 5,294, or 50.8%. The MIC conducted its research by collecting information from all the manufacturers above, as well as from the trade magazines Dealernews and Motorcycle Product News. Because the study's sources vary from year to year, the MIC warns that comparisons with previous years are subject to "considerable error." The report further indicates that 58.8% of the new vehicle retail outlets carry only one of the 13 major brands. Slightly less than one-fifth are dual-line outlets, and 21.9% carry three or more of the major brands. The total number of franchises distributed among the 5,134 new vehicle outlets declined 5.6% to 9,182 from 9,731 in 2009.

- **NO BONES ABOUT IT** - Most "experts" agree that riding motorcycles helps you to FEEL younger, but can riding actually make your body healthier and more youthful? A recent Medical College of Georgia study found that; "A daily dose of whole body vibration may help reduce the usual bone density loss that occurs with age," on top of improving muscle strength and promoting weight loss... so it would appear that pulsating power from a motorcycle engine and the rumble of the open road will help aging bones get stronger. The extrapolation isn't entirely far-fetched, and may lead to a healthy new excuse to ride; "Honey, I'm taking my exer-cycle for a workout."

- **2011 NCOM CONVENTION IN ALBUQUERQUE** - Mark your calendar now for the 26th annual NCOM Convention, to be held Mother's Day weekend, May 5-8, 2011 at the Hyatt Regency Albuquerque located at 330 Tijeras Ave NW in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Awareness is our best defense. Please stay involved legislatively.

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