



of Nebraska

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**Transportation and Telecommunications Committee
Written Testimony for LB 52**

Chairman Fischer and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. The Arc of Nebraska is a support and advocacy organization with and for people with developmental disabilities. We are a state-affiliated chapter of The Arc of the United States. The Arc of Nebraska is a statewide organization with 17 local chapters and approximately 1,500 members across Nebraska.

The Arc of Nebraska opposes LB 52 which allows for exceptions to wearing protective helmets by operators and passengers of motorcycles and mopeds.

We understand LB 52 allows for the option of persons age 15 to 21 to be exempted from wearing a helmet after their successful completion of a safety course. We are concerned that persons within the 15 to 21 age range will be likely to sustain head injuries if not required to wear helmets. Because the injury to the person occurs within this age group before the person turns 21, this effectively creates the possibility for more people to acquire a developmental disability due to a head injury. This can become quite costly to Nebraskans, not only by the person who sustained the head injury and their family, but to taxpayers as well. When a severe head injury is sustained a person needs quite intensive medical care and rehabilitative services that may last a lifetime. Insurance can only pay for so much (if the person is insured). The other ancillary services that the person and families will need to access are covered by tax payers. Surely, in times of economic difficulty, Nebraska would not want to implement a law that so blatantly shifts such a financial responsibility simply for the choice of going helmet free.

Further, we understand LB 52 to require the utilization of protective eye wear. Suggesting the use of protective eye wear does not address the potential for preventing the head injuries likely to be sustained by persons not wearing a helmet. Helmets and eye wear are not equivalent. While we commend the use of protective eye wear, we fail to see how it is offered as a substitute. Perhaps it may be offered in addition to the utilization of helmets.

In the interest of public safety and fiscal responsibility we request that LB 52 not advance. Thank you.