

News Release: Michael L. Prince, Director Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning

[Note: The following is an excerpt of a news release from Michael L. Prince, Director of the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning, as published in the *Ludington Daily News* on June 19, 2008. *Emphasis added.*]

Based on analysis conducted by our office, if Michigan's mandatory motorcycle helmet law was to be repealed, the state should expect to see an ***annual increase of at least 30 fatalities, 127 incapacitating injuries and \$129 million in economic costs.***

Helmet repeals in other states have generated significant increases in fatalities, injuries and economic costs. As an example, following helmet repeals, fatalities increased 21 percent in Arkansas, 31 percent in Texas, over 50 percent in Kentucky and 100 percent in Louisiana. In Louisiana, the helmet law was reinstated in 2004.

While public debate over whether there should be a legal requirement to wear a helmet is understandable, debate over the safety benefits of helmets is not. ***Every reputable safety research organization in the world supports the use of helmets as a way to reduce injury, death and economic costs resulting from brain trauma. The facts are not only clear, but undeniable....***

Michigan has always been seen as a leader with regard to traffic safety. Laws mandating the use of helmets and safety belts are there for good reason and Michigan's track record in reducing traffic fatalities and injuries is envied by many other states. Repealing traffic safety requirements in exchange for funding to public safety, real or perceived, is not only a step backwards, but it sends the wrong message to the public. The end result will be a short-term gain in revenue for a long-term ***loss in lives, serious and disabling injuries, and millions in economic costs to the citizens of Michigan.***