



Dear Mr. Richardson,

24 January, 2009

The Ontario Road Riders Association would like to state that we do not support Bill 117 prohibiting passengers under the age of 14 on motorcycles and will assist our fellow motorcyclists in the fight against this ludicrous and frivolous legislation when Parliament resumes in February. With just a quick internet search of the Ontario Governments own website, the numbers presented by MPP Jaczek can easily be refuted.

During the second reading of Bill 117 MPP Jaczek noted that the purpose of the Bill was to protect children from preventable injuries. This Bill will not do what is intended as it addresses only an extremely small percentage of children's injuries. Children injured as motorcycle passengers total 21 based on the Ministry of Transportation Annual Safety Report for 2005. Numbers this small would seem to make Bill 117 unwarranted.

The same Ministry of Transportation Annual Safety Report goes on to say that there were 859 injuries involving children as pedestrians yet we are not prohibiting children from walking. It states that there were 37 injuries involving children riding bicycles and 117 injuries involving children as bicycle passengers (an incident rate 7 times higher than that of motorcycle passengers) yet we are not prohibiting children from riding bicycles with their friends. It also goes on to say that there were 4,049 injuries involving children as passengers in automobiles (an incident rate 192 times higher than that of motorcycle passengers) yet we are not prohibiting children from travelling. The American Journal of Sports Medicine has reported on a study conducted in Canada and concluded that 1 in 4 children will be injured playing minor hockey. In the 2005/2006 season Hockey Canada had 250,578 players registered in Ontario. That represents a staggering 62,244 Ontario children being injured while playing hockey which is an incident rate 2,983 times higher than motorcycle related injuries. Prohibiting children under 14 from participating in any of these activities is unreasonable and impractical and that is the point we are trying to make. In all of the aforementioned activities, including motorcycling, both parents and children would be better served by increased enforcement of current legislation, safety training and an increased awareness of the risks involved rather than the heavy handed, emotional approach proposed in this Bill.

If MPP Jaczek and the other supporters of this Bill were sincerely interested in preventing injuries to children they would have drafted a Bill addressing minor sports and automobile collisions, rather than a statistically insignificant motorcycling injury. But maybe that's the point. As statistically insignificant riders, they may not be expecting much of a fight. They will be wrong!

Kevin Keay Smith
President
Ontario Road Riders Association