

INTRODUCTION

to the MRF White Papers Volume 1

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Often those of us in the motorcyclist's rights movement become reactionary. When I say "reactionary" I don't mean it in the political sense of liberal and conservative, rather I use the term "reactionary" to define the way we set the agenda for our movement. We don't look to the future and attempt to develop strategies and anticipate issues. We "react" to what we perceive to be our immediate problem and respond to that problem. This reaction has led to our being short sighted and allowing our enemies to dictate the context of the issues to be discussed.

Further, our "reactionary" politics have all too often led us to be negative. We are against helmet laws. Against headlight-on laws. Against purported insurance reforms. Against! Against! Against! Why aren't we positive and proposing changes which could have a positive impact on motorcycling? The reason is that we have spent so much time being against things that we forget what we are for. These Papers are the beginning of an attempt to remedy that situation by discussing issues and presenting approaches to solving them. The four topics presented here for your consideration are, hopefully, the first in a series which will provide motorcyclist's rights activists the wherewithal to be better informed, positive activists. The topics for the Papers were selected because all the issues are different, but current.

The first paper, Catastrophic Health Insurance, discusses a matter which will confront us all in the near future. The attempts by others to regulate us out of existence by punitive insurance legislation are becoming more frequent. Using the Maryland experience with this problem, Robert Higdon (Chair and primary author, ABATE of Maryland), Christopher Kallfelz (AMA), and Todd Vandermyde (ABATE of Illinois) have provided us with a good working tool that can be used as a reference when the issue becomes current in your state. Note from this Paper how the "social burdenists" attempt to use their arguments as a back door way of limiting our ride.

The second paper, Contributions of Motorcycling to the U.S. Economy, offers us some hard figures to help put motorcycling in perspective with the business world. Motorcycling is money, as is well recognized in many communities. Kristine "Miss Kris" Jackson, with assistance from the Motorcycle Industry Council and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, has collected and condensed a treasury of information that you will find helpful in portraying a picture of motorcycling in both human and economic terms.

The third topic, The Social Value of Motorcycling, offers a different type of response to the "social burdenists" who would legislate us out of existence. It is not an easy subject because motorcycling is such an individual experience, and a number of distinctly different perspectives are presented. Before you read The Social Value of Motorcycling, think for yourself, "What is the social value of motorcycling?" Not an easy question, but one that you should work on answering.

In the final Paper, Motorcycling Emissions, A.J. Travis (ABATE of New York) discusses pollution control and the effect of such restrictions on the nature of our ride. We must be vigilant as other interest groups press their own agenda which conflict with our way of life. This Paper gives us an idea of what might be in store for us in the future, and what issues we might need to address in the controversies over what we ride.

Needless to say, these Papers are but a sampling of the issues that arise, but they were selected because of their different natures and their timeliness. If you have any suggestions for future work and would like to participate, make yourself known.