

MRF LEADERS' REPORT
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#06LR06 - MRF LEADERS' REPORT - October 26, 2006

TO: The Leaders of the American Motorcyclists' Rights Movement

FROM: Jeff Hennie, MRF Vice President - Government Relations

SUBJECT:

MRF Leaders Report

October 26, 2006

LAUTENBERG LETTER - Recently, Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) sent a letter <http://www.mrf.org/pdf/lautenbergletter06.pdf> to all fifty governors praising the benefits of compulsory state helmet laws. Eighty-two-year-old Lautenberg is gearing up for a fifth Senate term in 2008 and appears ready to continue his efforts to mandate safety. While Lautenberg played down his sound defeat on the Senate floor last year following his call for a vote on a mandatory motorcycle helmet law amendment, he closed his recent letter suggesting similar legislation may be introduced in the United States Senate in the near future.

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF), along with Garden State ABATE (ABATE of NJ) and the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), arranged a meeting with Mr. Lautenberg's DC office staff. The purpose of the meeting was to attempt to determine if the Senator's goal is to save lives or merely to grandstand, using the helmet issue for personal political gain. During the meeting, staffers revealed that while Lautenberg is a tireless advocate of highway safety, his preferred method of achieving his goal is with a federal or state mandate.

Safer highways are important to both the MRF and Mr. Lautenberg. However, historically mandates prove not to be the solution to the problem, as Mr. Lautenberg would have you believe. The MRF position will always be that quality education and effective measures assuring road user accountability will result in safer roads for everyone. The MRF will continue to educate Mr. Lautenberg, informing him about the methods and practices that do work when it comes to motorcycle safety. We will continue to closely monitor his intentions. Intuition tells me he is not prepared to abandon the concept of helmet mandates any time soon.

You are encouraged to contact the Governor's Highway Safety Representative in your state and inquire about the letter. Ask if a response has been or will be sent to Lautenberg's office by your state. The MRF does not recommend that you contact Senator Lautenberg's office at this time. If history is any indicator generating a national response will only serve to provide unwarranted attention and validation for his unsolicited letter.

MORE GOVERNORS' LETTERS - Another letter arrived in most gubernatorial mailboxes recently but this time it was good news. Forty-four states and Puerto Rico received notice they would be receiving at least \$100,000.00 for motorcycle rider education and awareness campaigns. The actual amount awarded to each state is determined by a complex formula, taking population and public road miles into account. Essentially, more people and more miles of public roads in your state result in more money. The amount awarded has no bearing whatsoever on the existing rider education and safety community at large in each state. The states not listed either failed to qualify or did not apply for this round of grants.

Knowing how much money your state has received will enable you to keep your state motorcycle safety division accountable when they start spending. According to the public law that created the grant program, your state can make some of the funds available to a non-profit organization incorporated in your state. Whether your non-profit organization obtains a portion of the funds or not, at the very least you can make sure that the money is used for motorcycle safety and awareness as it was intended. If you are having problems with the way the money is being used in your state, let the MRF know and we will do what we can to help right any wrongs. The chiefs at NHTSA have already agreed to help direct the money to quality rider education and awareness campaigns and away from useless studies and government waste, fraud, and abuse.

Applications for next year's grants are due August 1, 2007 and will be open to the fifty states and all US territories. The program will spend another six million dollars from 2007 through 2008 and climb to seven million dollars in 2009 when the program expires. The states include:

STATE

FISCAL YEAR 2006 GRANTS

ALASKA

\$ 100,000

ARIZONA

\$ 104,577

CALIFORNIA

\$ 412,672

COLORADO

\$ 103,649

CONNECTICUT

\$ 100,000

DELAWARE

\$ 100,000

FLORIDA

\$ 225,414

GEORGIA

\$ 148,666

HAWAII

\$ 100,000

IDAHO

\$ 100,000

ILLINOIS

\$ 195,477

INDIANA

\$ 122,952

IOWA

\$ 100,000

KENTUCKY

\$ 100,000

LOUISIANA

\$ 100,000

MAINE

\$ 100,000

MARYLAND

\$ 100,413

MASSACHUSETTS

\$ 111,845

MICHIGAN

\$ 167,290

MINNESOTA

\$ 120,614

MISSOURI

\$ 125,360

MONTANA

\$ 100,000

NEBRASKA

\$ 100,000

NEVADA

\$ 100,000

NEW HAMPSHIRE

\$ 100,000

NEW JERSEY

\$ 132,247

NEW MEXICO

\$ 100,000

NEW YORK

\$ 253,711

NORTH CAROLINA

\$ 143,946

NORTH DAKOTA

\$ 100,000

OHIO

\$ 180,080

OKLAHOMA

\$ 101,629

OREGON

\$ 100,000

PENNSYLVANIA

\$ 189,804

PUERTO RICO

\$ 100,000

RHODE ISLAND

\$ 100,000

SOUTH DAKOTA

\$ 100,000

TENNESSEE

\$ 117,703

TEXAS

\$ 316,210

UTAH

\$ 100,000

VIRGINIA

\$ 127,286

WASHINGTON

\$ 118,102

WEST VIRGINIA

\$ 100,000

WISCONSIN

\$ 120,353

WYOMING

\$ 100,000

TOTAL: FORTY FOUR STATES AND PUERTO RICO

\$ 5,940,000

Motorcycle Advisory Council Holds Inaugural Meeting

The recently
<<http://www.mrf.org/articles/2006/06NR1806nr18motorcycleadvisorycouncilappointed.htm>> announced Federal Highway Administration Motorcycle Advisory Council (FHWA MAC) met on October 24th in Washington DC. The council, created in the last Highway Bill (PL 109-59), was formally introduced by the Department of Transportation last month. Five of the ten seats on the council are held by the MRF, ABATE of OH, ABATE of SD, AMA and the MIC. The remaining seats are held by state department of transportation officials and

traffic safety engineers. The group's charter is to advise on motorcycle safety and infrastructure issues.

The meeting was also attended

<<http://www.mrf.org/articles/2006/06NR1706nr17secretaryoftransportationnominated.htm>> by the newly confirmed Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Mary Peters. Secretary Peters opened the meeting by sharing her love of motorcycling with the group and how important it is to her to see the fatality numbers come down while keeping motorcycling as pure as possible. She encouraged the members of the advisory council to be thorough as they explore the issues before them. Secretary Peters is the proud owner of two motorcycles that she rides as often as possible.

The Council decided to focus on a number of large issues such as pavement surfaces and markings, barriers, signage, roadway design, and Intelligent Transportation Systems, just to name a few. The council will also work to increase awareness of the issues with highway engineering firms, state transportation officials, and others in the highway and road industries that make critical decisions when designing our nation's roads, bridges and barriers. The council will compile a set of recommendations over time and report those recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation. The council is set to reconvene sometime this coming spring.

OOPS!

MRF PAC recently announced its endorsement of Mr. John Gard, who is running for the 8th Congressional District of Wisconsin. The official announcement sent out by the MRF PAC was subject to a technical problem that prevented the correct version of the release from going out. The result was a release littered with typos. The MRF PAC would like to publicly apologize to Mr. Gard and ABATE of Wisconsin for any confusion or embarrassment this may have caused. I can assure that every safeguard has been installed to ensure that this won't happen again. Thanks for your understanding and patience.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me in our Washington, DC office with any questions, comments or threats at jeff@mrf.org or 202-546-0983.

Jeff Hennie

MRF Vice President - Government Relations

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Sign up today for the MRF's new roadside assistance program by visiting <http://www.mrf.org/mrfroadside.php>

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