

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF
REQUIRING MINORS TO WEAR HELMETS WHEN ENGAGING IN SNOW SPORTS OR
RIDING MOTORCYCLES, ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES OR BICYCLES.

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WHEREAS, the use of helmets by minors engaging in snow sports or riding motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles or bicycles decreases the severity of injury, the likelihood of death and the overall cost of medical care; and

WHEREAS, helmets are effective in preventing traumatic brain injuries, which often require extensive, costly treatment and may result in lifelong disability, including physical impairment, cognitive impairment to short- and long-term memory and behavioral impairment; and

WHEREAS, among children under the age of fifteen, head injuries account for about twenty-two percent of total estimated injuries; and

WHEREAS, winter sports helmets reduce the risk of head and brain injury by fifty-three percent in children fifteen years of age and younger; and

WHEREAS, studies show that unhelmeted motorcyclists are three times more likely to suffer traumatic head and brain injuries in a crash than are helmeted riders; and

WHEREAS, a study conducted by the United States consumer product safety commission found that twenty percent of all- terrain vehicle accidents resulted in head injury and that at least sixty-five percent of those riders receiving head injuries were not wearing helmets; and

WHEREAS, head injuries account for sixty-two percent of bicycle-related

deaths, thirty-three percent of bicycle-related emergency room visits and sixty-four percent of bicycle-related hospital admissions; and

WHEREAS, bicycle helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of head injury by as much as eighty-five percent and the risk of brain injury by as much as eighty-eight percent;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested to study the costs and benefits of enacting legislation that would require minors engaging in snow sports or riding motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles or bicycles to wear helmets and that it report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate interim legislative committee by October of 2003; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the New Mexico legislative council and the department of health.

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