

SB 17 Proponent Testimony
ABATE of Kansas
House Committee on Transportation
March 6, 2019

Chairman Proehl, Vice-Chair Thimesch, members of the House Committee on Transportation. I am Steve Christenberry, lobbyist for ABATE of Kansas, a motorcycle rights organization. I have also been a Motorcycle Safety Foundation rider education instructor since 1994, and am the President of Smart Motorcyclists Attend Rider Training, Inc., which teaches classes at Seaman USD 345 and Shawnee Heights USD 450.

KSA 8-235 currently allows for an exemption from having the “M” endorsement on their driver’s license for a period of time after purchasing a motorcycle and before their temporary license tag runs out (60 days), unless they already have the “M” endorsement, or obtain a learner’s permit. Data collected on motorcycle crashes and fatalities show that nearly 50% of the motorcycle riders involved do not have the “M” endorsement on their driver’s license. This suggests that half of riders may not have the basic skills to ride a motorcycle, especially when one considers that most motorcycle crashes are single vehicle, such as a rider going off the road in a curve, failing to brake properly, or not knowing how to swerve to avoid obstacles in the roadway. We know, of course, that there are other factors that contribute to crashes, such as intoxication and distracted riding, but the mere fact so many of the crash involved riders do not have an endorsement suggests a lack of basic skills requisite for motorcycle operation.

To obtain the “M” endorsement a motorcyclist must either successfully complete a rider education program approved by the KSDOE, or pass the test at the Department of Motor Vehicles to demonstrate they have the basic skills to ride a motorcycle.

Eliminating the exemption clause in KSA 8-235 would promote increased rider education, licensing, and law enforcement citations for unlicensed motorcyclists.

ABATE of Kansas, the state motorcycle safety committee, and rider education programs would encourage the Committee to adopt this bill.

Respectfully

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President and RiderCoach, S.M.A.R.T., Inc.