

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2009-1007

TITLE: Resolution Relating to Motorcycle Safety

AUTHOR: Senator Ben Cavataro

SPONSOR: Senator Ben Cavataro

WHEREAS, on December 2, 2008, Michael R. VanWagner, a senior at the University of Florida, was fatally injured after a car crashed into his scooter on West University Avenue; and

WHEREAS, on November 19, 2007, Ashley Ann Groves, a sophomore at the University of Florida, suffered traumatic head injuries in a scooter accident and missed six months of classes while undergoing therapy; and

WHEREAS, Florida state law requires that motorcyclists under 21 are required by law to wear a helmet, although that law is seldom enforced; and

WHEREAS, a Florida state law requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets was repealed in 2000, which the *Gainesville Sun* called in its editorial of December 4, 2008 “a stunning act of irresponsibility”; and

WHEREAS, injuries from motorcycle accidents have risen sharply since 2000, with 7,282 motorcyclists were injured in 8,147 crashes in 2005, compared to 4,474 injured in 5,073 accidents in 2000; and

WHEREAS, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statistics show that Florida leads the nation in motorcycle deaths, with 537 fatalities in 2007, more than twice as many as any other state except California and Texas; and

WHEREAS, a 2004 study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* found that “the current age-restricted version of Florida’s motorcycle helmet law resulted in more motorcyclist deaths even after adjustment for concurrent increases in motorcycle registrations or miles traveled” and “Exempting adult motorcycle riders from wearing motorcycle helmets is counterproductive for motorcyclists’ health and unnecessarily increases insurance and medical care expenses”; then

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Student Senate of the University of Florida urges all students and other members of the University of Florida community to use motorcycles and scooters safely, and especially to always wear helmets while riding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Student Senate urges drivers of cars to respect motorcyclists and cyclists alike, and to share the road with them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Student Senate urges the Florida Legislature and Governor Charlie Crist to reinstate the 2000 helmet law for the protection of all motorists.