

Bruce on Bikers' Rights

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OPEN LETTER TO ABATE OF ILLINOIS

"We only have those rights we are willing to defend."



Fellow Riders and Freedom Fighters in the State of Illinois:

I have had the privilege of riding across your great state four times in the past six weeks: first going to and returning from Sturgis, then twice over Labor Day Weekend as part of two Iron Butt Association "Bun Burner Gold" runs from Miami Beach to Chicago and back by way of East St. Louis. On I-24 West near its terminus at I-57, three Illinois riders and myself were almost killed by a cellphone-impaired cager, one of many nationwide who apparently feel their right to gab is more important than our right to life:

<http://tinyurl.com/23spaz>

Perhaps that should not be surprising, since as I observed last weekend, the State of Illinois posts signs that actually *encourage* motorists to use their cellphones while they are driving:

<http://tinyurl.com/2x35dn>

I hope you will see clear to follow the example set by our brothers and sisters in Delaware, and demand that your governor and the misguided safetycrats in your state capital take down those signs, and stop encouraging such irresponsibly reckless and dangerous behavior:

<http://tinyurl.com/yr7sb4>

Make them understand that we have 236 million cellphone subscribers on our roadways ... that 73% of them are talking while they are driving ... that cellphone conversations impair their driving skills as much if they were intoxicated with alcohol ... and that consequently they are four times more likely to cause or be involved in an accident than motorists who responsibly shut up and steer. The Oklahoma Highway Safety Office, for example, reports that ONE IN FOUR ACCIDENTS in Oklahoma last year occurred when a driver was talking on the phone:

<http://tinyurl.com/yvlo09>

Can the numbers in your state be much different? Based on what I experienced there, I doubt it. And exactly how many motorcycle accidents, injuries and deaths are attributable to the negligence and inattentive blindness of cellphone conversation-impaired cagers? We don't know for sure, because NOBODY seems to be capturing that data (*somebody correct me here...please!*). What we do know, however, is that according to NHTSA in 2005 motorcycles accounted for only 2.54% of all registered vehicles while motorcyclists accounted for 10.48% of

all crash fatalities, and that riders were 4.5 times more likely to be in a fatal accident. That means that motorcyclists are far more likely to suffer injury or death at the hands of a cellphone conversation-impaired cager than other motorists.

Cellphone-related or not, RIGHT-OF-WAY VIOLATIONS BY CAGERS have long been the single most significant threat to the life and limb of responsible motorcycle riders. And that is never going to change, so long as the price negligent and care-less motorists pay for maiming or killing bikers is no more than a slap on the wrist:

<http://tinyurl.com/yoqkdq>

As bikers' rights advocates for your state, I hope you recognize it is *your* responsibility to see that justice is served—not just in the charges, but in the sentencing—in heinous cases like the recent murder of Illinois motorcyclist Frank Ferraro by impaired cager Erika Scoliere:

<http://tinyurl.com/25gtyp>

I implore you not to wait too late to take action in this regard. Otherwise, Erika Scoliere may literally get away with murder, just like ABATE of Ohio allowed to happen with respect to Thelma Bartley, the drunk who killed Ohio motorcyclists Marshall Atwood and Deborah McClintock then plea-bargained her way to a sentence of only 90 days and a \$150 fine:

<http://tinyurl.com/ynlal2>

As motorcyclists, "... we only have those rights we are willing to defend". Our brothers and sisters in Vermont have been put on notice that it is time to defend those rights:

<http://tinyurl.com/ytrzq9>

Our brothers and sisters in Idaho have been put on notice that it is time to defend those rights:

<http://tinyurl.com/ysgqfo>

And now you, our brothers and sisters in Illinois, have been put on notice as well. Know that there are concerned riders from coast to coast standing ready to support you.

Speaking strictly for myself and no other individuals or organizations,

Bruce Arnold

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