

Good morning Chairman Rust and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. My name is Mandy Slag and I am the Injury Prevention Program Director for the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) and a registered nurse. I am not a motorcycle expert. My expertise is in injury prevention. I am here to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 2194.

This bill proposes to allow an adolescent less than 16 years of age to operate a motorcycle with an increase in the engine size from 250 cubic centimeters (cc) to 510 cc. An increased motor size allows an operator to travel at an increased speed. Other motorcycle characteristics besides engine size influence power and speed capability (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

***Motorcycle Rider (Operator) Fatalities, by Engine Size (cc), 2006 & 2015***

Year	Engine Displacement (cc)			
	Up to 500		501-1,000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>2006</b>	226	5%	1,992	44%
<b>2015</b>	314	7%	1,821	39%

*Source: Fatality Analysis Reporting System 2006 Final File, 2015 Annual Report File*

The table above presents motorcycle rider fatalities by the engine sizes of the motorcycles. Nationally, there were 314 fatalities regarding motorcycle engines up to 500 cc. This chart demonstrates that the number of fatalities increases with the increase in engine size. There is also an increased risk for severe injuries with increased engine size. Although a causal relationship between engine size and fatality cannot be proven, we know that increased speed does increase risk for crashes.

Along with increased speed, these larger motorcycles could also be more difficult to control, especially for that age group. This could increase the risk of a crash, leading to death or injury. Although there were no North Dakota deaths due to motorcycles to 14 or 15-year-olds in 2016-2017 (NDDoH Vital Records), there were seven documented injuries due to motorcycles during that same time (ND Department of Transportation).

In a teenager's brain, the connection between the emotional part of the brain and the decision-making center are still developing and not necessarily at the same rate. Very few states even allow motorcycle operators to be under the age of 16 years old. Of the states that do allow this age group to drive motorcycles, restrictions apply. For example:

- Tennessee allows an operator to be 15 years old with restrictions on the distance to be traveled from home (7 miles), the time of day (4 a.m. to 8 p.m.), and the engine size (125 cc).
- South Dakota allows operators 14 to 18 years old to have a permit that allows motorcycle travel between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.

I urge a do not pass for SB 2194 to reduce the risk of injury and death of North Dakotans. This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.