

Submitter: Marissa Joscelyn
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB422

Thank you for taking the time to consider this written testimony. I write in support of SB 422. I operate motorcycles on Oregon roads, though not more than one at a given moment. I have been riding motorcycles for about 10 years. I've been driving passenger vehicles for about 20. I support this bill for several reasons, though many of these have already been discussed in the testimony submitted by others.

I'd like to use this opportunity to address motorcycle visibility awareness. The most convincing argument against SB 422's very limited allowance to drive between lanes, only on highways, only 10 miles an hour over the speed of traffic, and only when the average speed of traffic is going 10 miles per hour or less, is that other motor vehicle operators are unaccustomed to this practice, will startle, and may cause a collision. This argument does not point to the vulnerability inherent to motorcycling, but instead the lack of awareness and education that non-motorcycle operating drivers possess about how motorcycles maneuver and the precision and control a motorcycle operator has. It also shines a glaring light on one fact that all motorcyclists know, that visibility equals safety, and that people who don't ride are less likely to see motorcycles on the road. Studies have proven that people who have no experience riding a motorcycle don't process the visible shape of a motorcyclist with the same regularity as a car, truck, van, or larger vehicle. This study has been applied to bicyclists that utilize shared roadways as well, in that other motorists are less likely to detect a human on a bicycle due to their "low conspicuity" than a larger vehicle.

So what does this have to do with "lane-splitting?" I'm glad you asked. The more exposure that other motorists have to motorcycles on the road, the more they will get used to their presence and understand their operation. The small allowance this bill carves out for motorcyclists does just that. It literally allows motorcycle operators to pass more vehicles in traffic, allowing more people to see them. Sure, as you've already read, I hope, it will allow motorcycles to legally escape a rear-end collision by utilizing the space between vehicles. This is a huge improvement to highway riding by itself. But what I'm excited about as a motorcyclist in Oregon, is that this bill will encourage other folks who share the road to get more familiar with motorcycle operation too. I'd love for this kind of awareness to be the norm, not an ideal we have to chip at through bills like this.

I'm interested to hear more about the data from Utah submitted by Representative Walt Brooks and AMA representative Nicholas Haris. I would think that at least some of the reason for the reduction in the number of fatal collisions involving motorcyclists was due to drivers simply being more aware of them.

I'm from Illinois, so in parting I'll share their motorcycle safety slogan with you. "Start seeing motorcycles." And let us share the road too. Thank you for your time!