

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2207

November 21, 2013

Dr. Thomas Frieden
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Rd
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Frieden:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to a series of findings and conclusions reached by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Community Preventive Services Task Force as part of their continued efforts to advocate in support of universal motorcycle helmet laws.

Of utmost concern is a slide contained in the recent October 23, 2013 presentation by the Helmet Law Review Team designated as the "Economic Impact of Motorcycle Helmet Law: A Systematic Review." Slide 11, entitled "Analytic Framework: Motorcycle Helmet Laws to Reduce Motorcycle-related Fatal and non-Fatal Injuries," infers a positive awareness of helmet laws with the potential for reduced motorcycle use. The presentation goes on to conclude that "economic evidence shows that universal motorcycle helmet laws produce substantial economic benefits, and these benefits greatly exceed expected costs," however, there is no reference whatsoever to the significant economic costs anticipated by reducing motorcycle use.

In fact, the only costs identified by the Task Force on slide 37 are the costs of purchasing a motorcycle helmet and the enactment and enforcement costs of helmet laws, which are concluded to be negligible. Not only does this contradict the earlier findings about how imposing motorcycle laws would discourage motorcycle use, but it ignores the positive economic impact motorcyclists provide.

Motorcyclists not only enjoy riding on American roads, they also spend billions of dollars touring and attending rallies. Reducing motorcycle use would have a detrimental effect on the motorcycle-industry, dealer sales, tourism, associated employment and related tax revenues. As an avid and experienced motorcycle rider, I believe government should be in the business of promoting the recreational, economic and environmental benefits of responsible motorcycle riding – not discouraging it.

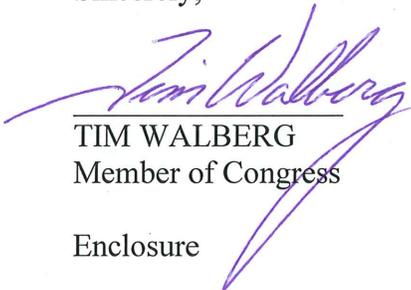
The CDC has the great responsibility of addressing and protecting public health. During difficult fiscal times, the American people would be better served by your continued efforts to address widespread societal health matters such as virus prevention, cancer and heart disease. In order to ensure Congress and the public may be fully informed and confident in the information

promulgated by the nation's health protection agency, I respectfully request that you provide answers to the following questions:

1. With the staff of the Community Preventive Services Task Force stating the "potential reduction of motorcycle use" as a potential outcome of helmet laws, is it the goal or strategy of the CDC to reduce the use of motorcycles - a legal mode of transportation - by recommending and pursuing a federal helmet law?
2. If so, how would this strategy be implemented and by what authority would it be instituted? Does the Community Preventive Services Task Force intend to engage Congress or the motorcycle community before making recommendations?
3. Do you believe CDC is the federal agency best suited to research and make recommendations on the issue of transportation safety?
4. As the CDC considers future policy recommendations, will you consider the full economic costs associated with discouraging motorcycle use?

If you have additional questions or comments, please contact Jonathan Hirte in my office at (202) 225-6276.

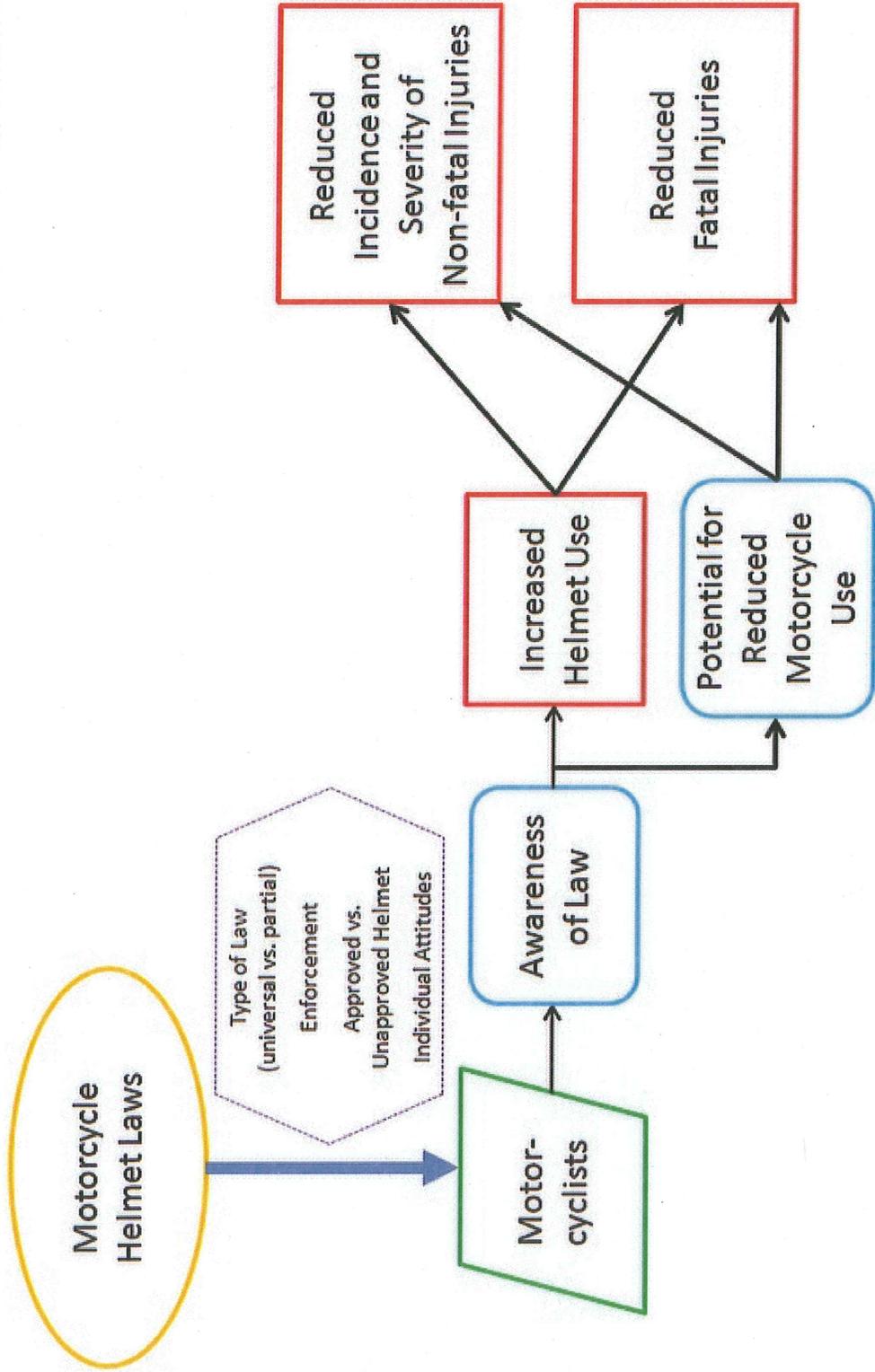
Sincerely,



TIM WALBERG
Member of Congress

Enclosure

Analytic Framework: Motorcycle Helmet Laws to Reduce Motorcycle-related Fatal and Non-fatal Injuries



Economic Research Questions: Answers

Q1: What costs are associated with motorcycle helmet laws?

A1:

- Main cost is cost of motorcycle helmet, ranging from \$1.3 - \$4.5 million per 100,000 motorcyclists per year in 3 cost-benefit studies (2012 US\$).
- No information was available on enactment or enforcement costs, but these costs are expected to be negligible.
- Cost of a helmet is associated with private payer perspective.