

Hello, my name is Joel Picou and I would like to take a minute of your time to address the subject of wearing hearing protection while riding a motorcycle. I would like to thank Representative Goodman for bringing this to your attention.

As I understand, Ohio law prohibits motorcyclists from wearing ear plugs while riding. This antiquated law needs to be repealed. The facts conflict with the current law. It is vital that riders are able to protect their hearing from wind noise.

I currently ride a quiet motorcycle and wear ear plugs to protect my hearing. Wind noise is the primary reason I wear ear plugs. Studies have shown wind noise can exceed 100 dB and damage hearing. I wear a full faced helmet. Even wearing a quality helmet, the wind noise can damage hearing. Many times I ride for hours at a time and if I do not wear hearing protection, I have a ringing in my ears.

I am in construction and over the last 30+ years I have been exposed to excessive noise. In the workplace, OSHA requires hearing protection above excessive levels. OSHA has defined 85db as the intensity beyond which there is potential for permanent hearing loss. The longer you are exposed to sounds above 85 dB the more cumulative damage you will suffer. This is permanent damage. Using OSHA's guidelines, you can only be exposed to 110 dB for 30 minutes. I want to protect my hearing, whether I am on a construction site or riding my motorcycle. The current law requires riders to expose themselves to noise levels that are in excess to what OSHA allows in the workplace. Foam ear plugs like I wear have a noise reduction rating (NRR) of 30db. These plugs do not block all noise. They greatly reduce noise to a level that won't damage my hearing.

I can assure you that wearing hearing protection absolutely does not impede my ability to hear sounds, like sirens or horns. In fact, I believe I can hear these sounds better because ear plugs eliminate the constant background wind noise.

It is also important to note that many states have repealed laws similar to Ohio's ban on ear plugs.

Thank you for your time and please support this bill.

Sincerely,

Joel Picou