

Karen's Letter Re: North Las Vegas

My name is Karen Jurasinski. I live at 6240 E Carey. I know this is not located in North Las Vegas but I live in a section of Las Vegas that has me traveling through North Las Vegas about half of the time I go out.

The reason I am here today is the police departments' new policy concerning issuance of helmet tickets.

To give you some idea about my motorcycling background: I want to let you know that I have been riding motorcycles for over 40 years. I have owned my own motorcycles since 1982 and bought my current bike in 2001 and have averaged between 20 to **25,000 miles per year** on my bike.

I am the current president of the Local Women in the Wind motorcycle group that I have been a member of since 1999. I have been a member of ABATE since 2004. ABATE is a national motorcycle rights organization and I am the current vice president of ABATE of Southern Nevada.

I am here tonight to let the City of North Las Vegas know that we, the motorcycling community, are not happy with the current policy of the police department regarding the issuing of helmet tickets. They are pulling bikers over ONLY to issue tickets for what THEY feel are non-DOT helmets. And what they are mostly basing it on is if the helmet has a DOT sticker on the back of the helmet or not.

There are several issues with this. The department does not have a list of what they feel is an appropriate DOT approved helmet. They also do their observation of the helmet while both the bike and car or patrol bike is moving. AND the department does not have a certified training for their officers so that they are qualified to determine whether a helmet is DOT approved or not. Plus the way the helmet law is written is ambiguous at best.

There are a large amount of motorcycle accidents that happen yearly. Unfortunately it took an accident directly in front of the police station to bring the situation to life for North Las Vegas. It seems that the responsibility of the deaths fell directly on the bikers and the equipment they were wearing, not on who was truly at fault for the accident. The driver of the car PULLED OUT in front of the bike giving the driver of the bike no time to react and avoid the car causing the death of 2 innocent people. If the driver would have waited about another 10 seconds the bike would have gone by and no one would have gotten hurt.

Channels 8 and 13 both ran pieces on how they could have been saved if they had been wearing appropriate headgear. Channel 13's piece especially made it sound like if you wear a DOT approved helmet you will always survive an accident that is NOT the case. It might have saved the passenger in this case but it would not have saved the driver.

In at least 70% of accidents involving cars and motorcycles are right of way violations with the driver of the car being at fault and usually by pulling out in front of OR making a left hand turn in front of the motorcycle. If the driver of the car was not intoxicated at the time of the crash he or she will usually get a fine that is usually under \$75 dollars and maybe traffic school.

My ideas for cutting down on right of way violations are easy:

- Increase the fines and penalties when injury or deaths result from a right of way violation. \$500 fine and 30 day loss of license for an injury and \$1000 fine, 90-day loss of license and possibly 24 to 48 hours in jail that causes a death. I am proposing this as a concerned biker. Think of the number of accidents, injuries and deaths this would

reduce overall if people knew they weren't going to get away with just a slap on the wrist; think of the extra revenue it would bring in.

- PSA's and billboards. I have seen more billboards in Las Vegas on not crossing running water than watching out for bikers and we have MANY more accidents than emergency water rescues in this town.
- A low cost solution is to change the traffic school curriculum and put in a half an hour dedicated to motorcycle safety. Explain to people how bikes, because of their small profile, are harder to determine speed so instead of trying to make that turn just wait a few extra seconds and avoid that accident.

I feel that we bikers still carry the stigma from the old days where everyone who rode a bike was an outlaw and we are the ones who still get punished today. Today the majority of the riding populace is the baby boomers AND an ever-increasing amount of riders are women; almost 15% of all riders are women. Almost everyone in here either has a bike or knows someone who rides. And I feel the best way to make it safer for all of us are to educate the public and not to punish us, the motorcycling community.

Thank you for your time tonight.