

## Biker deaths go up as helmet laws weakened

*by UPI*

WASHINGTON - As state motorcycle helmet laws weaken, crash death rates are rising steadily in the United States, a survey indicated Thursday. The proportion of older fatalities also went up, the Gannett News Service analysis reports. Most states once required motorcycle riders to wear helmets but that trend changed course after 1995 when the federal government stopped holding back highway money for states without helmet laws. Fatality rates stood at 5.6 riders killed for every 10,000 registered motorcycles. By 2006, that rate had risen to 7.3 deaths, the analysis said. Nearly half of motorcyclists killed in 2006 were at least 40 years old. The average age was about 38, Gannett News Service said.

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