



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 568 (as enacted)
Sponsor: Senator Rick Jones
Senate Committee: Transportation
House Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure

PUBLIC ACT 160 of 2018

Date Completed: 7-17-18

RATIONALE

Previously, the Michigan Vehicle Code prohibited a person from operating a motorcycle or moped equipped with handlebars higher than 15 inches from the lowest point of the undepressed saddle to the highest point of the operator's handle grip. Evidently, many modern motorcycles and mopeds are sold with handlebars that exceed 15 inches in height. Some feared that, previously, Michigan residents could have been given tickets for operating motorcycles or mopeds that were not modified from their stock condition (original factory specifications). To address this concern, it was suggested that the maximum allowable handlebar height on those vehicles be increased.

CONTENT

The bill amended the Michigan Vehicle Code to prohibit a person from operating on a public highway in Michigan a motorcycle or moped equipped with handlebars higher than 30 inches from the lowest point of the undepressed saddle to the highest point of the handle grip of the operator. As stated above, the previous maximum allowable handlebar height on those vehicles was 15 inches.

The bill took effect on May 23, 2018.

MCL 257.661a

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

The previous maximum allowable handlebar height of 15 inches for motorcycles and mopeds was unreasonable. According to testimony provided before the Senate Committee on Transportation, many vendors sell stock motorcycles with handlebar heights exceeding 15 inches. Without an amendment to the Code, a customer who purchased a new motorcycle with handlebars that exceeded 15 inches could have been ticketed for operating that motorcycle as soon as he or she drove it off of the lot.

Many jurisdictions have handlebar height restrictions that far exceed Michigan's previous limit. According to the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, as of June 2016, Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Utah, and Wyoming restrict handlebar handgrips from exceeding shoulder height; Washington and Wisconsin restricted handlebar height to 30 inches above seat height. Georgia limits the permissible handlebar height to 25 inches above the seat and Illinois specifies that handgrips may be no higher than head height. In addition, 20 others states and the District of Columbia prescribe no limit on the height of handlebars.

The 15-inch maximum handlebar height restriction was unnecessary and put consumers at risk of unknowingly breaking Michigan law. The bill addressed this problem and updated Michigan statute to reflect current consumer preferences as to motorcycle handlebar heights without compromising motorcyclists' safety.

Legislative Analyst: Drew Krogulecki

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill will have no fiscal impact on the State and may have a minor negative fiscal impact on local government. The bill allows more motorcycles and mopeds to be driven on public highways. A violation of the provision regarding handlebar height is a civil infraction. Any decrease in civil infraction fine revenue will reduce funding for public libraries.

Fiscal Analyst: Ryan Bergan

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.