

Legislative Report March, 2022 Freedom

Even with the sponsorship of several members of the leadership of both parties in the Senate, and amazing support from the motorcycling community, SB5622 died at the end of February 7, 2022. I was truly impressed when Vice-Chair of the Committee, Sen. Saldana stated that 476 people had registered in support of the bill, versus only 25 opposed at the end of the hearing that day. We had better testimony from the people giving their one-minute speeches than the opponents did, and there were more of them as well. However, it was all for nothing due to the political games played by Senator Marko Liias, the Committee Chair of the 21st district (Edmonds, North Lynnwood, Mukilteo area).

In an attempt to delay the possibility of a hearing for the bill prior to the cut-off date of February 7, Senator Liias requested a Health Impact Review on the bill. This process, by law is supposed to take 10 days. Even though the process was complete prior to the cut-off date, and was found to be inconclusive, it was finished within the last five days prior to the cut-off. The bill could be heard, but unless the Chair brought up waiving the “5-Day Rule” prior to the hearing, the bill would not have the chance to be passed out of Committee prior to the cut-off and would die because it had to have 5 days before an executive session on it could be heard. Senator Liias not only didn’t waive the “5-Day Rule”, on SB5622, even though he did on another bill. Senator Liias also, suggested to other committee members that they use the tool of a Health Impact Review on bills in the future as it is such an effective tool. So, even though we had a hearing on the bill, and I believe we did quite well, one-third of the Committee were sponsors to begin with and others seemed at least on the fence, Senator Liias insured that it was nothing more than a symbolic hearing that would have no chance on moving the bill forward for the reasons I have already stated.

By going out of his way to request the HIR on the lane sharing bill and then not waiving the “5-Day Rule”, Senator Liias did more than just allow the bill to die. He effectively acted on his long history of obstructing pro-motorcycle legislation, and by utilizing the tactics of delay, he personally killed the lane sharing bill. Even though the bill had very strong and influential sponsors and supporters in the Senate.

While it is only my opinion, I do believe that Senator Liias played these political games because he was afraid the bill would pass. If the bill had passed on to the Rules Committee in the Senate to await debate and a vote on the Senate Floor, three of the bills sponsors were also on the Rules Committee. So Senator Liias could not keep the lane sharing bill locked up in the Rules Committee as he had done with our parking bill in years passed. I truly believe that the only way Senator Liias could prevent the lane sharing bill from moving forward was by doing anything he could to slow it down to the point that even with a hearing, it would have no good way of moving out of his committee. So Senator Liias effectively put a bullet into the lane sharing bill so that it would die quietly and never leave the committee he only just gained control of at the beginning of this session.

We will keep fighting. Already, there is new language that covers the issues the opponents brought up. We took a good bill, and made it better, with just a very few additional sentences. Do not allow Senator Liias and his obstructive issues with ABATE backed bills win. If you live or work in the 21st District, let people know that it was Senator Liias by whose actions a strongly bi-partisan pro-motorcycle bill was killed. Senator Liias has repeatedly shown his opposition to the motorcycle community, an already

marginalized community in society, and has killed a bill that would have a good chance of reducing many of the serious and fatal injuries we suffer on the roadways each year.

Keep up the good fight, and I'll catch you on the road sometime...