

# Cyclists see mostly harm in adult helmet law

By Laura J. Nelson, Los Angeles Times

A proposed law that would make California the first state in the country to require that adult bike riders wear helmets has reignited a decades-long debate between regulators and the bicycling community over safety.

Senate Bill 192, introduced by state Sen. Carol Liu, D-La Cañada Flintridge, would impose a \$25 base fine on adults who bike without headgear. The proposal has spurred a backlash from California's bicycle advocacy groups, which say a mandatory-helmet law would do more harm than good. Helmet laws could make cycling appear more dangerous, they say, at a time when elected officials are working to draw drivers onto alternative forms of transportation.

Liu said she wants to encourage people to try biking and walking and keep them safe while doing so. Requiring helmets for adults isn't the only way to protect cyclists, she said, but "it certainly protects people more than not wearing anything on their heads."

Collisions involving cyclists in California rose 18 percent in a five-year period, from 11,814 in 2008 to 14,013 in 2012, according to the most recent California Highway Patrol data available.

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