



ABATE of Florida, Inc. Asks Judges & Legislators to Levy Stiffer Penalties to Negligent Drivers

As many know, ABATE of Florida, Inc's "Stiffer Penalties" Bill from the 2010 Florida Legislative Session (CS/HB 875 – "Traffic Offenses") was killed the very last day of the Session. Although the total number of motorcycle-related deaths on the Florida roadways has decreased, the drivers hitting and killing motorcyclists are still mostly walking away with fines ranging from \$87 to \$159. That's a small price for cutting off a motorcyclist and seriously injuring and many times killing them.

As of October 17, 2010, there have been at least 12 fatal crashes in Florida in 2010 alone. Of these, we know of less than half of them that have pending court hearings, and only 4 of these drivers remain in custody. It appears that most the drivers killing motorcyclists are cited for "Failure to Yield"; which is just a traffic ticket.

So far in October there have been two hearings in cases of this type; one in Bushnell that was continued to January 11, 2011; the other in Seminole County continued to October 21, 2010. This second one is from a crash that killed a motorcyclist back in September 2009... over a year ago. Finally, it appears the judge may not be happy with the repeated continuations... all while the driver that killed "Diamond" Dave Mackish has been free and not required to attend any of the hearings since February 2010.

Other court hearings coming up;

- A mandatory hearing on October 18th for Thomas Sherman in Escambia County, who was cited for "Careless Driving" after hitting a Harley Davidson from behind, killing Karl Murray. ABATE of Florida's Gulf Coast Chapter will be attending this hearing;
- A mandatory hearing on October 25th for Arjuna Y. Jani in Lee County. Jani was cited for "Failure to Yield Right of Way" after turning in front of Philip J. Baker, killing him when the bike and SUV collided. ABATE of Florida's Estero River Chapter will be attending this hearing;
- A hearing in Citrus County on November 5th for Stephanie Nicole Chewning after she cut off Michael J. Lafferty, killing him in the resulting crash. She's been cited for "Steady Red light, failed to yield while turning". Planning is underway for ABATE of Florida's Nature Coast Chapter to attend this hearing.

Please visit www.abateflorida.com and click on "Chapters" for contact information to learn more about attending these upcoming hearings. If you're reading this before you vote on November 2nd, please remember the candidates that are motorcycle friendly; we'll be counting on them during the upcoming legislative session to show that motorcyclists' lives are worth more than a traffic ticket. Isn't your life worth more than \$87 to \$159? I know my family thinks mine is.

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