



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 08 2023

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 847 without my signature.

This bill would authorize the California Highway Patrol to adopt a regulation to certify motorcycle helmets that do not meet the safety requirements imposed by Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards in order to accommodate a driver's or passenger's religious beliefs.

Motorcycle helmets save lives. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) requires that all motorcycle helmets sold in the United States meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 218. This standard defines minimum levels of performance that helmets must meet to protect the head and brain in the event of a crash. According to NHTSA, helmets that do not meet FMVSS 218 create a higher risk for skull fracture and brain injury when compared to certified ones. Approval of a helmet model that does not comply with rigorous federal safety standards will undoubtedly impact public safety.

While I am sensitive to the protection of religious freedoms, I cannot support legislation that would have the unintended public safety consequences associated with this proposal.

For this reason, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom

