

Jeff Hennie



I cut my political and legislative teeth serving for six years as a legislative aide to a Member of The U.S. Congress. During that time I learned the intricacies of the federal legislative process from conceiving bill ideas to being signed into law as well as the many different circles of influence that affect our nations capitol. I have also worked on several Federal Congressional and Senate campaigns, furthering my knowledge of the political campaign process. I earned a Bachelors of Science degree in environmental biology from Taylor University in Upland, Indiana in 1996. I am originally from the Chicago, Illinois area but have been living in Washington, D.C. since 1999. I have been riding some kind of motorcycle since I was ten years old and don't see an end in sight. Currently sitting on a 2007 H-D Softail.

As the Vice President of Government Relations, I serve as the MRF's (Motorcycle Riders Foundation) employed lobbyist, working on behalf of and in the interests of the MRF. I am responsible to inform and coordinate action with regard to legislation, executive action or judicial decisions affecting motorcyclists on the state and national levels. I serve as a liaison with the state motorcycle rights organizations with respect to political or technical advisors and speakers available through the MRF. In addition, I coordinate with the Director of Communications for an informational flow to ensure timely press releases, brochures and proper political content of all MRF publications. To ensure consistent and professional standards, I coordinate all legislative matters for the MRF.

Riding Inside The Beltway

A Political Look At Motorcycles

This is the first of many columns to appear here that will deal explicitly with what your elected officials are doing concerning motorcycles. Don't stop reading. Some of you are already in mid jaw-snapping yawn due to the often tedious and boring nature of Washington. Don't let that stereotype prevail here. I can assure that there are some very exciting things happening in Washington that will leave you speechless.

First, a little background, for those of you who haven't had the pleasure of riding in or around our Nation's Capital city, let me caution you against ever doing so. I am, of course, mostly kidding. The District of Columbia is ringed by a circular superhighway know as I-495 or more commonly, simply as the "Beltway."

The Beltway is not a particularly enjoyable place to ride a motorcycle during commuting hours, to say the least.

I suppose I should introduce myself, I am a resident of Washington DC, and serve as paid lobbyist for a not-for-profit in Washington known as the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF). My Name is Jeff Hennie, and I have been working in Washington for 10 years, holding jobs as a Congressional aide, campaign operative, political strategist, and now lobbyist and all-around political junkie. My path to politics was somewhat unconventional, in that I didn't study or aspire to ever work in politics, but that's another story.

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The MRF is the only on-road motorcycle advocacy group in Washington DC. The MRF has been successfully protecting the rights of this country's motorcyclists for 23 years strong. The MRF is the go-to organization for the White House, The Congress and the Agencies when dealing with anything that could affect motorcyclists.

The laundry list of success by the MRF is lengthy, so I'll dwell on just a few of the recent victories. The MRF spearheaded an initiative to form a grant program to send money back to the individual states to fund cash-strapped rider education programs. Last year, six million dollars was infused into the state rider education programs. By the program's end in 2009, \$25 million dollars will have been spent on rider education programs and motorist awareness campaigns. This initiative, the first of its kind, will help rider education programs accommodate the growing family of new riders.

Motorcycle sales are beginning to come back, registrations are climbing as well, and this trend will only bring more and more new motorcyclists into the riding mix. Without proper education of these newbies and returning older riders, we all face one more obstacle on the roads that can be avoided.

Read Jeff's Monthly Updates on Political Activity Involving Motorcyclists
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