HB 992: Loose dogs causing injury (Rep. Burger)

Dogs running out in front of bicyclists injure 450 Missourians annually—counting only those injuries serious enough to require an emergency room visit. This is one of the top six causes of injury to people who bicycle. Just the out-of-pocket medical costs for those emergency room visits total $1.4 million annually. Including time off work, follow-up medical bills, and other related costs we estimate the total cost of those injuries at $2.8 million annually.

An unfortunate loophole in current Missouri law means that owners of dogs that bite are held responsible, but if dogs cause injury in some other way, for example, by running loose in front of bicycle riders, the same law does not apply.

Non-bite dog injuries are actually more common among people who bicycle than bite injuries. Because they generally involve a serious crash of some kind—whether hitting the dog or swerving to avoid it—non-bite dog injuries to people bicycling are, on average, more severe and more costly than dog bite injuries.

HB 992 is narrowly targeted to close the loophole in current Missouri law by making dog owners responsible for injuries caused by their animals, whether by biting or any other way. We strongly support HB 992.

Loose dogs and bicycles—facts:

- Nationwide, dog-bicycle crashes and bites/attacks represent about 1% of bicycle crashes and injuries.
- Nationwide, all bicycle crashes and injuries cost Americans about $14 billion per year. So the 1% of all crashes/injuries resulting from dog/bicycle encounters represent about $140 million annually in injury costs nationwide.
- 49% of dog/bicycle injuries are bites, 51% are other causes—chased by a dog, hit a dog, swerved or tried to avoid a dog.
- The most severe injuries were among those who swerved/tried to avoid a dog, or hit a dog. Bites resulted in less serious and less costly injuries, on average.
**Dangerous Dogs and Bicycles - Information Sources**

Missouri emergency room visits:

- Injury MICA data from Missouri emergency rooms, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.


Percentage of bicycling injuries related to dogs, percentage of injury due to bite vs other causes, relative cost of bite vs non-bite injuries:

- Injuries to Cyclists due to a Dog-Bicycle Interaction by RT Loder & AP Yaacoub AP. In *Veterinary and Comparative Orthopaedics and Traumatology*, 2018 May;31(3):170-175.


Total cost of bicycle injuries nationwide:


  Online at [https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/24/2/135](https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/24/2/135)