

**SAFETY HELMETS FOR SCOOTER, SKATEBOARD
AND SKATE USERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18**

(Adopted by Convention Delegates April 2001)

Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2010

- WHEREAS,** With the reemergence of scooters and the growing popularity among youth of skateboards, skates and the “extreme sports” phenomenon, injuries, disabilities and deaths have increased; and
- WHEREAS,** From January 2000 through November 2000, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates there were about 32,700 injuries related to scooters; the commission also reports there are approximately 26,000 persons treated each year in hospital emergency rooms with skateboard related injuries, while in 1996 an estimated 76,000 children and teenagers younger than 21 years were injured sufficiently while in-line skating to require emergency department care; and
- WHEREAS,** The statistics related to injuries and deaths related to non-use of safety helmets while using scooters, skateboards and skates continue to rise, with six out of every 10 skateboard injuries occurring in children under the age of 15 and about 85% of the injuries related to scooters occurring in children less than 15 years old, while industry forecast sales of scooters for the year 2000 to reach 2 to 5 million units; and
- WHEREAS,** National PTA recognizes “that head injuries are one of the leading causes of death and disabilities for young people in America and studies have shown that use of protective helmets can significantly reduce the frequency and severity of bicycle and other sports-related head injuries;” and
- WHEREAS,** A review of studies by the California Department of Health Services concludes that mild head injuries (MHI) can have a significant and sustained impact on the ability of children and adolescents to learn and function effectively; and
- WHEREAS,** There is no compulsory requirement for youths under the age of 18 to wear safety helmets while using scooters, skateboards, or skates in the state of California; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts urge school districts to adopt policies that require all students to wear safety helmets when using scooters, skateboards and skates on school campuses; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts inform students, parents and the community on the need for, and the use of, safety helmets for scooters, skateboards and skates; and be it further

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- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA support the adoption of state legislation mandating the use of Consumer Product Safety Commission and/or American Society for Testing and Materials approved safety helmets for all youths under the age of 18 using scooters, skateboards and skates in the state of California; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA forward this resolution to National PTA for consideration at its 2002 convention.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

In 1995, the California Legislature with the urging of the California State PTA authorized the Bicycle Helmet Law to protect youth while using bicycles. It is time to extend this protection to the youth that use scooters, skateboards and skates.

Much attention has been focused on severe, traumatic brain injuries. But 90% of the new cases of medically diagnosed head injuries each year are mild head injuries (MHI). Though the patients may not show immediate signs of neurological problems or need to be hospitalized, studies have shown the effects of MHI can have significant and sustained effects on children's ability to learn and function effectively in school.

Other states have passed legislation addressing this concern. Laws in the states of New York and Oregon require helmet use by child and adolescent skaters. The City Council of Manhattan, New York, unanimously passed a law on January 24, 2001 requiring children under 14 to wear helmets while riding foot-powered scooters.

The unnecessary injury and death of children could be avoided if the California Legislature mandated the use of Consumer Product Safety Commission approved safety helmets for youth under the age of 18 using scooters, skateboards and skates. Currently private skate parks have such requirements to mitigate their liability in the event of an accident. Parents need to prevent children's injuries by providing them with the safety equipment and instructions for proper use. PTAs throughout California can protect the safety and well-being of children by promoting safety programs for scooters, skateboards and skates that emphasize the use of safety helmets. In addition, PTAs throughout California should also urge school districts to adopt policies that require all students to wear safety helmets when they use such equipment.