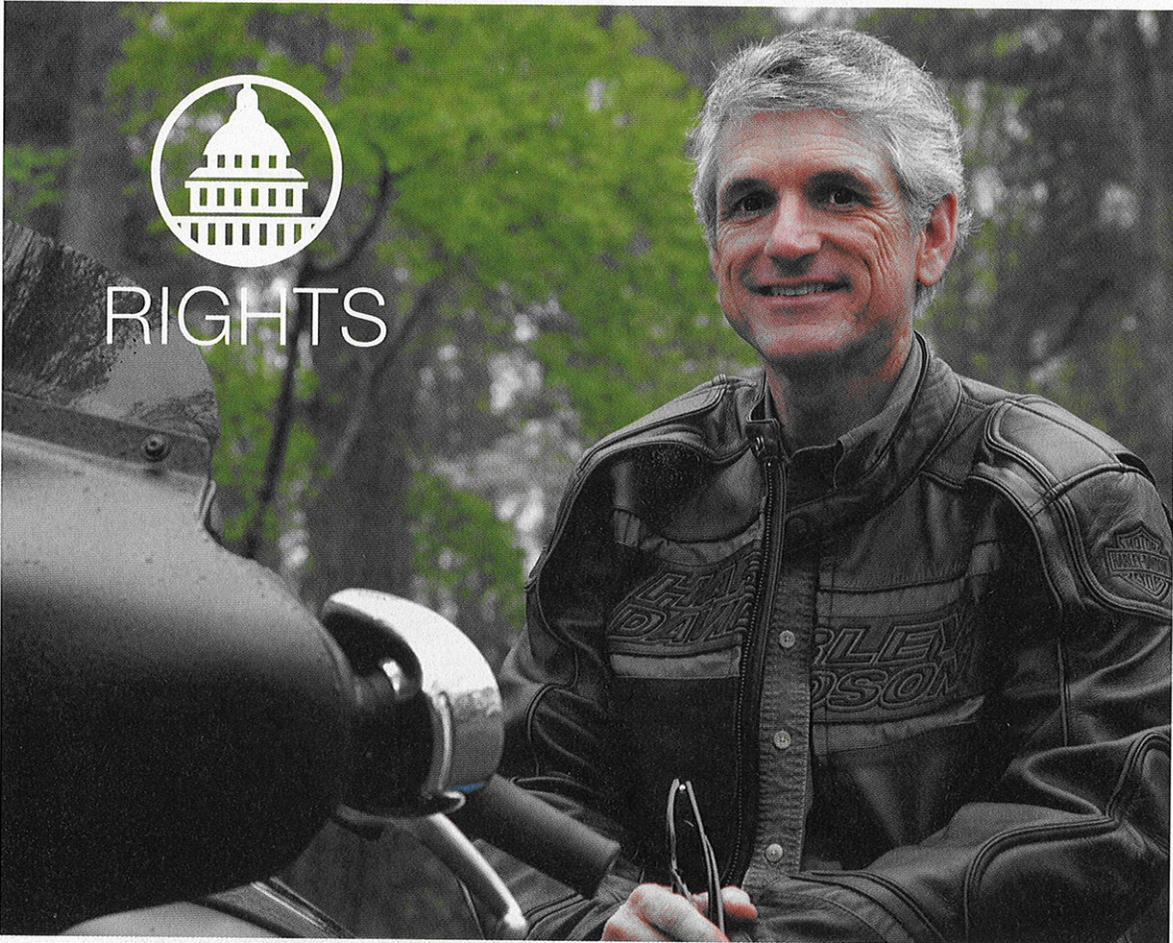




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4 QUESTIONS WITH...

U.S. Rep. Scott Rigell

U.S. Rep. Scott Rigell (R-Va.) is a freshman lawmaker who also happens to be a Harley-Davidson rider. Rigell serves on the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology, which deals with ethanol and other issues. We caught up with the congressman to find out a little about his riding and issues facing riders.

American Motorcyclist: Tell us about your riding experience.

Rep. Scott Rigell: My first bike was a Honda SL70 [I got] when I was 11 years old. Eventually I progressed up to a Honda XL200 in my teen years.

After marrying Teri and having our children, I wanted to assure they could enjoy motorcycling as I did. Our daughter, Lindsey, rode a little screamer Yamaha PW50 and my son, Justus, went through several bikes. So off-roading runs through the Rigell family!

Justus showed up at the house with a Harley-Davidson Street Bob about seven months ago. As a father, I had mixed feelings. At first, I was not sure that street riding at his age was a very rational idea. He was 22. However, I soon realized just

how cool it was and I became very proud of him.

Within just a few weeks, I ended up purchasing my current bike, which is a 2011 Harley-Davidson Road King. Of course, I have added a few touches to make it mine, as most riders do.

AM: What is your favorite place to ride?

SR: I reach my riding nirvana as soon as I hit the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (Route 13 N) heading towards the eastern shore. To the east, you have the Atlantic Ocean and to the west the Chesapeake Bay. Just the ships and history that have traversed this body of water brings me to a place where I feel in touch with the fabric of the 2nd District of Virginia.

There is also the engineering wonder of this structure that includes two mile-long tunnels... Once I reach the end of the bridge-tunnel and arrive at Fishermen's Island, the rural environment takes over and allows me to disconnect.

When riding a motorcycle, the rider feels connected to the environment due to the sensory stimulation. This closeness makes me more aware of the history, farms and

people in the district that I am privileged to be serving. I recommend this route to any rider due to the terrain being easy to navigate. The only challenging part of this ride would be taking in the sights because there is not an issue with grades or curves, but the beauty just takes you over.

AM: What are the biggest issues facing motorcyclists or off-highway vehicle (OHV) users today?

SR: We need riders to bring awareness to road conditions. For obvious reasons, a motorcycle has specific dangers that a four-wheeled vehicle would navigate without issue. In our district, as an example, the highways have expansion cracks that in some portions measure close to 4

inches in width. The scary bit is that they run parallel in the middle of the lanes. I dread ever getting stuck in one of these as I ride.

Off-highway riders face the issue of lack of access to federal lands, but there is an even more acute issue. Just finding somewhere to ride has become problematic. Many riders, including those here in Virginia, face the issue of having to travel great distances in order to ride their machines. Encroachment laws, sound laws and the like all play a role in this issue and need to be addressed or soon there will no longer be areas to ride our OHVs.

AM: Is there anything else you would like to add?

SR: Since I started street riding, I have noticed a unique aspect of motorcyclists. Veterans are represented at a very high rate among this community and held in very high regard. The patriotism, generosity, and love of country are overwhelming to me. Groups such as the Patriot Guard Riders embody the spirit that Americans should show towards its veterans. I am looking forward to joining organized rides, especially in Washington, D.C., to show the nation how motorcycling and personal freedom go hand-in-hand.

AMERICAN MOTORCYCLIST

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