

State lawmaker's proposal takes a turn for the better

By Frank DeFrank

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State Rep. Anthony Forlini leans to the right politically, but the Harrison Township Republican is strictly bi-partisan when it comes to signaling turns while riding his bicycle.

Public Act 1 of 2014, the first bill of the year signed into law this week by Gov. Rick Snyder, had Forlini's right hand print all over it. It was Forlini's proposal that now makes it legal for Michigan bicyclists to signal right-hand turns with either their left or right arms.

"It's just intended to give an option," Forlini said.

An avid bicyclist, Forlini noticed while riding with others who share his passion that some riders signaled right-hand turns with their left arms bent into an "L"-shape, sort of an old-school approach, while others simply extended their right arms.

"In my mind, both are fine," Forlini said. "But come to find out, (the right arm gesture) wasn't legal."

In researching the law, Forlini discovered the use of arm gestures to signal vehicle turns dated at least to the 1940s, a time when not all vehicles, including automobiles, were equipped with turn signals. Since a driver couldn't realistically put his right arm out the passenger window, the left-arm signal became the legal form for both right- and left-hand turns.

While those signals have long-since ceased to be necessary on passenger vehicles, they still apply to the two-wheeled mode of transportation Forlini prefers.

So the Harrison Township lawmaker drafted a bill to give riders the option. The bill passed the House and Senate and officially became Michigan's first law of the new year with the governor's signature.

According to the Asso-

ciated Press, Snyder said the new legislation is a "common-sense" law that will make Michigan roads safer.

And for Forlini, now in his second term as a state representative, his name will become a footnote in the history of the Michigan Legislature.

"It will always be in the halls of the capitol," he said.



State Rep. Anthony Forlini's bill to provide bicyclists an option to signal turns with their right arms became the first new law enacted in Michigan in 2014.