



## **Tommy Thompson: Secretary of Health and Harley Services**

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([PRWEB](#)) September 18, 2003 -- Tommy Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services, has won this month's Noisy Dozen award from Noise Free America for roaring his motorcycle to the Harley-Davidson 100th anniversary celebration over Labor Day weekend in Milwaukee. Secretary Thompson, a Harley enthusiast, should not be adding to America's health problems by encouraging noise pollution from motorcycles. He seems to think he is the Secretary of Health and Human Services instead of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Pablo Nankin, a medical doctor in Beverly Hills, California, states, "It should be embarrassing to the highest health official in the country to be seen endorsing noise pollution. Doesn't Mr. Thompson know that most riders modify their motorcycles to create greater noise and havoc? Doesn't he know that high decibel levels can lead to hearing loss, chronic fatigue, and depression?"

Mark Huber, Noise Free America's Communication Director, stated that "Secretary Thompson is derelict in his duty. He has consistently failed to alert the American public about the health effects of noise pollution. Indeed, Secretary Thompson seems to believe that blasting through town on a motorcycle is somehow 'cool.' He should be directing the Department of Health and Human Services to take action against a great threat to America's public health."

Ted Rueter, Noise Free America's director, noted that "the motorcycle 'loud pipes' crowd increases the famous Harley sound by tampering with the stock mufflers or replacing them with illegal after-market exhausts, some of which are made by Harley as 'Racing Exhausts.' Rueter observes that "Harley's famous 'V' design produces a loud percussive noise, which Harley uses as a marketing tool. In February 1994, it even went so far as to attempt to trademark the noise."

While many motorcyclists use the slogan "loud pipes save lives," there is absolutely no scientific evidence to support this claim. In reality, "loud pipes ruin lives." The extreme noise from motorcycles serves to irritate car drivers and distract motorcyclists. Mark Huber notes that "courteous, defensive motorcycling saves lives--not attempting to make aggressive noise than can be heard from blocks around."

Art Friedman of Motorcycle Cruising magazine calls on motorcyclists to stop using loud pipes: "We in the motorcycling press are also to blame. We routinely show bikes with modified exhaust systems and rarely point out that the machine is so loud that all of the owner's neighbors for blocks around must have contemplated taking a contract out on him. We tend to praise the looks of a custom bike without remarking that it didn't need to be loud to get those sexy exhaust lines. Even our exhaust-system comparisons probably don't state firmly enough how anti-social and damaging loud pipes are to motorcycling."

Noise Free America is a national lobby group dedicated to opposing noise pollution. Its web site is



<http://www.noisefree.org>. Past "winners" of the award include Congressman Darrell Issa, Viper Car Alarms, and Flowmaster.

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