

I teach boating education for the state of CT as a member of a non-profit boating organization and am writing in opposition to this bill for the four key reasons below. However, I do support the idea of getting CT-DEP out of the boating education business and turning it over to private providers, both commercial and non-profit.

1. There is no need for online service. There are eighteen United States Power Squadron units in the state and sixteen US Coast Guard Auxiliary units. Unlike states that have adopted online education, CT does not have a large, geographically spread out, rural population.
2. Online education is inferior because it lacks the dynamic interaction of classroom education. How do you ask the computer a question? How do you get to learn from other people's questions? Most teenagers would beat the pants off any legislator in computer use, but we don't let them take their HS classes on line, do we?
3. Online education will take business out of CT, at a time when many are struggling. Why are we so willing to teach CT consumers how to spend their money out of state (eg online)? Shouldn't we be applying our legislative talents to create new ways to *keep* these consumer dollars in CT's economy?
4. There are better ways to increase the supply of education and educators. Please take a look at how NY State handles the vetting and certification of boating safety instructors. I started out teaching there, so I know. Like CT, they do require registration of instructors, and materials must be from an existing, approved provider but they do not require instructors to be private members of NASBLA, which is a \$2500 hurdle. I stopped teaching privately when I moved to CT because of this business killing reason. Let's be friendlier to those whose skills and motivation would allow them to set up a part-time business teaching boating safety. You don't have to be Adam Smith to get that the supply of instructors and courses would go way up, probably more than enough to meet demand. AND.... \$\$\$ would stay in CT families who pay CT state taxes. And quality would not go down. USCG annual report for 2011 showed NY's rate of boating fatalities per 100,000 boaters is LESS than CTs.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Capt. Kent Steinnagel
USCG Lic. 50T Masters
Sail, Power, and Assistance Towing