

**Senator Edward Meyer, Representative Linda M. Gentile and the Environmental Committee**

Concerning HR Bill # 6541 hearing on Friday March 8, 2013.

**I OPPOSE THIS BILL AND OPPOSE ALLOWING ONLINE COURSES IN BOATER AND HUNTER SAFETY.**

I know that your committee is considering changing the law to allow a short on-line computer course to take the place of classroom-based safe boating courses. That's the change in the law that is also is going to allow on-line training for firearms. This is a really bad idea.

Please do not allow this new law to go into effect –

- this rule change has not been well publicized so that the public can comment on it
  - on line training is good for some things, but it's not good for "drivers ed" - it can't be good for "boaters ed"
  - you can't ask a question of a computer
  - you can learn from other students while you are at home taking the course on your laptop
  - you learn about boating from boaters - this is a cold computer, not a real person
  - I had to work for my "diploma" - why should the new students have it really easy and not know as much as I when boating
  - how do you know that the person taking the test is really the person who took the course
  - a computer can't show you how to dock a boat - or tell you what mistakes it made while it was learning
  - A computer cannot properly teach weapons training and safety for hunters and especially for children.
- This is an unsafe proposal which puts people at risk.

There are lots of things to learn about boating that aren't in the book. If you are sitting at home with your PC, you just can not "hear" what the other students are asking, and what the instructor is telling them. My teacher brought some "training aids" into the class - radios, ropes, charts ... How can students learning through a computer ever "see" what boating is about?

As an avid outdoorsman who enjoys hunting as well as boating I can tell you first hand that computer based training is not the answer. Regardless of the activity (boating or hunting) it doesn't take a great deal of research to prove that not everyone should follows the rules and regulations. These individuals endanger not only themselves but they endanger those folks that are following the rules and guidelines that were established in order to promote safety and responsible enjoyment of the activities mentioned. I think it is a safe assumption that the on-line process will be 'gamed' allowing individuals that "can't be bothered" to take the time to complete the course, have someone else take it for them. If people want a hunting safety certificate or a safe boating certificate they should **work** for it.

I STRONGLY oppose changing the regulations/laws regarding Boating Safety and Hunter Safety training at this time.

Thank you -

Respectfully,

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