

I am writing this letter in support of bill HB 6541, which implements an on-line system of teaching Safe Boating to the many thousands of CT state residents that need to get their Safe Boating Certificates to legally operate boats in our state.

I am a CT DEEP Safe Boating Instructor, and have been teaching these state classes for about 8 years. I do not get paid for these services. I am also a Private Provider, representing United States Powerboating, a division of the United States Sailing Association. I and my co-instructors in Essex, CT teach about 12 of these Private Provider classes per year and we do charge a fee for our courses. I do not believe that the on-line system will negatively impact our Private Provider courses, and in some ways will even increase the number of students coming to them.

In all of my courses I ask how many of the students have been operating boats in CT without having a legal boating certificate. A large percentage raise their hands. They just decided to finally become legal. I suspect that there is an even greater percentage of boaters out there who don't bother to become legal because they don't want to spend time in a classroom somewhere. On-line courses would make it much more convenient, and thus much more likely, that this group would get properly and legally educated. More educated boaters means fewer boating accidents.

For these reasons, I strongly support the passage of Bill 6541.

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