



**PERRY YACHT CLUB
8369 YACHT CLUB DRIVE
MERIDEN, KANSAS 66512**

To: House Transportation Committee
From: Perry Yacht Club, Richard J. Wells - Commodore
Date: March 17, 2015
RE: Senate Bill 190 Testimony

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of Perry Yacht Club in favor of the proposed amendment outlined in Senate Bill 190. Following is a summary of the points outlined in greater detail below:

- The Kansas Boater Certification course requires comprehension of a number of topics that are not relevant to operating a small sailboat (under 16 feet 7 inches) without auxiliary power.
- The topics in the Boater Certification course may be beyond the comprehension of 8-12 year old children learning to sail.
- Professional sail education courses led by an instructor provide comprehensive safety and on-the-water instruction.
- Requiring completion of the Boater Certification course in advance of an instructor led sailboat course is an impediment to enrollment and completion of the course by children.
- Professional sailing courses are more comprehensive and relevant to youth sailors than the Boater Certification course.

Problem: Kansas Boater Certification is a prerequisite for teaching young people to sail

A number of the topics covered in the Kansas course are not relevant to operating small sailboats (e.g.: Types of Engines and Drives, Fueling Your Boat Safely, Personal Watercraft (PWCs), Ignition Safety and Engine Shut-Off Switches, Fire Extinguishers, Skiing and Tubing, Waste Oil Disposal, and so on). In fact, some powerboat docking and maneuvering techniques are irrelevant for small sail craft and can cause confusion. Furthermore, some of the powerboat-related topics included for Kansas Boater Certification are beyond the comprehension of 8-12 year-old children learning to sail.

Proposed alternative for teaching and certifying sailing safety education

The American Sailing Association (ASA) and U.S. Sailing are the two national organizations that have developed professional courses for training youth and adults in sailing and water safety. These organizations inspect and certify facilities in the United States and throughout the world. They also certify professional sailing instructors through rigorous Instructor Qualification Clinics. Only experienced sailors are eligible to become professional sailing instructors and those who apply to be sailing instructors are carefully screened.

Professional sail instruction courses include most of the topics covered in the Kansas certification course (e.g., Parts of a Boat, Boat Capacity, Docking, Knot Tying, Boat Trailing, Unlawful Operation, Personal Flotation Devices, Rules of the Road, etc.). However, there are three major differences between professional courses and the Kansas Course: (1) professional courses are conducted on the water, docks, and land, where students have hands-on training; (2) professional courses focus on the potential sailing-related safety issues not included in the Kansas course, and; (3) professional courses consist of at least two days of training, versus the three hours (minimum) required for Kansas Certification. **In the proposed amendment, all relevant safety components of the Kansas certification course would be included in addition to safety components unique to sailboat operation.**

At present, the Kansas law requires individuals under 21 to learn to sail only when accompanied by adults on their vessel. Most of the boats used to teach sailing (e.g., Sunfish and Optimists) are designed to safely carry only one individual. In order to ensure student safety on the water, single-person boats are closely followed on the water by qualified instructors in "coach boats".

Background and Conclusion

Fifteen years ago Perry Yacht Club (PYC) in Meriden, KS became an American Sailing Association (ASA) facility in order to standardize its Sail Education Courses and ensure that their program meets the highest, most rigorous standards. Since 1999 (well before Kansas enacted boater certification laws), PYC has certified hundreds of adults and youth sailors. ASA also certifies PYC's sailing instructors through a rigorous 4-day Instructor Qualification Clinic. We support the proposed amendment and feel participation in a professional sailing course offers students more comprehensive and relevant safety and sailing instruction for the operation of a small sailboat.