

# Boating Safety South Carolina

A Voice for Safe and Responsible Boating

January 14, 2023

Chairman David Hall  
Lake Wateree Association, Inc.  
PO Box 2132  
Camden, SC 29020

Dear Chairman Hall,

My name is Randall Smith. I represent the 3.7k members of the South Carolina ⚓ Boating Safety group. I am also a founding board member of the South Carolina Crime Victims' Council.

We have a growing problem in our state that affects the safety of all of us that use and enjoy our lakes and rivers. The problem is inexperienced boaters with no proper training. Because of this, the number of accidents and deaths is increasing. Far too many people today did not grow up on the water. No one taught them the rule of safe boating, but you can help change that.

I would like to ask you for your support for two boater education bills now working their way through the State House. The two Bills are currently in the House and Senate. Bill H.3279 and Bill S.96 are very similar in that each would require everyone born after July 1, 2007, to pass a boater education course. Older boaters would be grandfathered in. This is the same method used in the Hunter Education requirement that is law today. This course is available online at no cost and, like the Hunter Education course, you only must take it once. There is no requirement to renew. This restriction would be for watercraft ten horsepower or greater and it would not affect anyone boating on private ponds or lakes.

To read the Bills:

H.3279      [https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125\\_2023.../bills/3279.htm](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023.../bills/3279.htm)

S.96      [https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125\\_2023-2024/bills/96.htm](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/bills/96.htm)

What I would like you to do is write a letter supporting both Boater Education Bills and send them to the sponsors of the legislation below and please send a copy to me.

**For Bill S.96**

Senator George E. Campsen, III  
305 Gressette Bldg.  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
  
State Office (803) 212-6340

**For Bill H.3279**

Representative Chris Wooten  
323D Blatt Bldg.  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
  
State Office (803) 212-6897

I take this personally. In 1997 my eleven-year-old son Drew was killed by an impaired boater on Lake Murray. At that time there were no BUI laws. The only thing in the law at that time that could be charged was manslaughter. So, I spent a year at the State House and in 1999 *The Boating Safety Act of 1999*, also called *Drew's Law*, was passed and signed by Governor Hodges. I wrote that legislation, and it is still the boating law that all cases are tried under today. For the past twenty-five years I have campaigned for boating accident victims and stronger boating laws.

I want you to know that I do this not for fame or notoriety because it is not about me. I have met and counseled far too many families to count. I am not asking for your sympathy, only your understanding. I do this to honor my son and to save some other family from going through what mine has. If you have any questions, please contact me or call Senator Campsen's or Representative Wooten's office.

Your support will be appreciated. Thank you and may God bless you.

Sincerely,

*Randall W. Smith, Sr.*

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