**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 50‑21‑870, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO PERSONAL WATERCRAFT AND BOATING SAFETY, SO AS TO PROHIBIT THE OPERATION OF A WATERCRAFT FOR A PERSON BORN AFTER JUNE 30, 1979, UNLESS THE PERSON HAS COMPLETED A BOATING SAFETY COURSE, TO REQUIRE THE PERSON OPERATING THE WATERCRAFT TO CARRY A BOATING SAFETY CERTIFICATE ON HIS PERSON OR ON BOARD THE WATERCRAFT, AND TO ALLOW FOR A PERSON TO PROVIDE PROOF OF CERTIFICATION ELECTRONICALLY.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 50‑21‑870(B)(9) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(9)(a) operate a personal watercraft, specialty propcraft, or vessel if he is ~~younger than sixteen years of age, unless accompanied by an adult, eighteen years or older, who is not under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or a combination of them. However, a person younger than sixteen years of age may operate a personal watercraft, specialty propcraft, or vessel without being accompanied by an adult if~~ born after June 30, 1979, unless one or more of the following applies:

(i) the person completes a boating safety program as administered by the Department of Natural Resources; or

(ii) the person completes a boating safety program approved by the Department of Natural Resources;

(iii) anyone operating a vessel with less than fifteen horsepower engine will not be required to take the boating safety program.

(b) ~~It is unlawful for a person who has temporary or permanent responsibility for a child to knowingly or willfully violate item (9) of subsection (B).~~ A person required to have a boating safety certificate pursuant to the provisions of this subitem must have the certificate on his person or on board the personal watercraft, specialty propcraft, or vessel while operating the watercraft, specialty propcraft, or vessel and must provide it and a government‑issued photographic identification card to any authorized law enforcement officer when requested. The person may provide proof of certification by use of a mobile electronic device and is deemed to be carrying the license on his person.

(c) The Department of Natural Resources shall promulgate regulations relating to boating safety programs administered by the department or subject to its approval.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect July 1, 2021.

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