

The House Committee on Game, Fish and Parks offers the following substitute to HB 556:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 52-7-8.3 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 operation of watercraft, identification, and operation by minors, so as to provide for boat
3 rentals and education courses; to provide for a penalty; to provide for a definition; to provide
4 for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 **SECTION 1.**

7 Code Section 52-7-8.3 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to operation of
8 watercraft, identification, and operation by minors, is amended by revising subsection (g) as
9 follows:

10 "(g)(1) As used in this subsection, the term 'course' means a rental education course as
11 provided for in paragraph (3) of this subsection. ~~No person shall rent, lease, or let for hire~~
12 ~~any vessel ten horsepower or more to any person under 16 years of age. On and after~~
13 ~~July 1, 2014, a person 16 years of age or older may rent or lease any vessel ten~~
14 ~~horsepower or more if such person has completed a boating education course approved~~
15 ~~by the department. This subsection shall not apply to any person licensed by the United~~
16 ~~States Coast Guard as a master of a vessel or a nonresident who has in his or her~~

H. B. 556 (SUB)

17 ~~possession proof that he or she has completed a National Association of State Boating~~
18 ~~Law Administrators approved boater education course or equivalency examination from~~
19 ~~another state.~~

20 (2) No person shall rent, lease, or let for hire any vessel ten horsepower or more to any
21 person under 18 years of age. No person shall operate a vessel that has been rented,
22 leased, or let for hire unless such person is 18 years of age or older and has completed a
23 rental education course approved by the department. A person 18 years of age or older
24 may rent, lease, or let for hire a vessel ten horsepower or more if such person has
25 completed a rental education course approved by the department. No person may rent,
26 lease, or let for hire a vessel ten horsepower or more to a person 18 years of age or older
27 unless such person has completed a rental education course approved by the department
28 and, if one or more additional persons 18 years or age or older will be present on such
29 vessel, at least one additional person has completed such course.

30 (3) Rental education courses provided pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection must
31 be approved by the department and must result in the issuance of a rental education
32 certificate upon successful completion of the course. Rental education certificates shall
33 be effective for six months after the date of issuance and shall be valid anywhere in this
34 state. Boat liveries shall use course materials approved by the department. At a
35 minimum, a course must consist of a ten-minute operation familiarization video followed
36 by a renter orientation checklist. Such video must address the following topics in order
37 to be approved:

38 (A) Operator responsibility, ethics, courtesy, and good judgment on the water;

39 (B) Safety equipment;

40 (C) Navigation rules;

41 (D) Aids to navigation, and buoys and other waterway markers; and

42 (E) Proper identification.

- 43 (4) The requirement to complete a course does not apply to any person licensed by the
44 United States Coast Guard as a master of a vessel, any person who has in his or her
45 possession a valid boater education identification card showing that he or she has
46 completed a boating education course approved by the department, or a person who has
47 in his or her possession proof that he or she has completed a National Association of State
48 Boating Law Administrators approved boater education course or equivalency
49 examination from another state.
- 50 (5) Any person who violates this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor."

51 **SECTION 2.**

52 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.