

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

May 5, 1999

LB 176

age of 16. I thought 14, in the committee, was a reasonable compromise and, keep in mind, you have to take the safety boater's course. I understand that we can do this. We have the power to do it, but I think it's overregulation. At what point in time can...should we let our young people ride jet skis? I don't know what the proper age is but I will tell you the age of the people who had accidents last year in the state of Nebraska and, keep in mind, last year we did not have any minimums or training classes. Of the 44 accidents, 1 was age 13, 4 were age 15, 8 were age 16, 4 were age 17, 3 were age 19, 1 was age 20, 5 was 21, 3 were 22, 1 was 23, 1 was 25, 3 were 26, 1 was 27, 1 was 28, and we had a 32, a 37, and a 38, and there was 4 old duffers like me over 40 years old. Yes, I can ride a jet ski. I can ride either one of them. I've never seen a jet ski go 85 miles an hour. Usually they get to hopping and jumping and they are uncontrollable at that speed. I imagine most of the jet skis that are ridden pretty fast it's about 30 miles an hour, and I would say it's no worse than wiping out on skis. That can be a danger too. You can pass this but we don't seem to be too concerned about kids drinking alcohol. We won't revoke their driver's license for trying to purchase. I think drinking and driving is a very serious issue and I suggest to you that probably a lot of these jet ski accidents, and keep in mind the majority of them were over 21 years old, may have involved alcohol. I guess we're supposed to tell our 14- and 15-year-olds, stay home, don't go to the lake, don't have fun. If that's what you want to do, fine, but I think we've taken a big step and I approve of LB 176. If they want to drive a jet ski, make them take the driver's saf...the boater safety course. It'd be my hope that children age 14 and 15 or 16 who are riding jet skis have some adult supervision, but I don't know how you legislate all this supervision. And, certainly, the talk today has been very supportive of the bill. Senator Hilgert is concerned that we might love it to death. But I can tell you, watersports are a lot of fun, and I hate to take away the privileges entirely of our youth to engage in these watersports. And I understand at age 14 and 15 that there is some concern, but we allow school permits for students age 14 years old. I don't know what the answer is. I had an amendment drafted that I would have introduced that said that 14- and 15-year-olds could not ride jet skis that are over 100 horsepower, and the note we got from Game and Parks is that would be very difficult