

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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LB 176

SENATOR SCHROCK: Madam President and members of the Legislature, I would rise to oppose this amendment and support the amendment that Senator Hilgert would offer should this fail. States around us, it seems like anywhere from age 12 to age 14 is quite popular for when you...what age you have to be before you can ride a jet ski. Kansas, you can ride a jet ski at age 12; Oklahoma, you can ride a jet ski at age 12; Wisconsin, age 12; South Dakota, age 14; North Dakota, age 12; Minnesota, "Land of 10,000 Lakes", age 13; Iowa, age 12; Illinois, age 10. We're going to set some pretty strict standards on our children who would like to ride a jet ski if we adopt this amendment. My experience with my sons when I was growing up, and maybe it's because I lived in the country, if they had to go somewhere, they had to go with Mom and Dad. If you're under age 16 and you're at the lake, chances are there's adult supervision there. I would hope that's the case, especially if you're riding a jet ski. We have a report from Game and Parks on the accidents that people who are riding jet skis had in 1998, and the average age of the operator who had the accident was 23. The oldest was age 44. But only 1 person under age 14 was reported in a jet ski accident in 1998; 4, age 15. Interestingly enough, age 16 was 8. Age 17 was 4; age 19 was 3; age 20 was 1; age 21, the year they can purchase alcohol and consume alcohol legally, 5. Do you suppose there's any connection there? Age 22, 3 of them; age 23, 1. These things get dangerous when you mix alcohol with them. My contention is that age 14- and 15-year-olds should be able to ride these jet skis. I will not argue with anybody that there is some danger there but, boy, we're setting a pretty high standard when you look at the states around us where most of them will allow jet skis to be ridden at age 12. We're asking them to go through a safety training class. I think that's appropriate. Please do not take away that enjoyment from age 14- and 15-year-olds. Let them take this safety training class, let them learn about water safety properly, and then give them the authority to ride a jet ski, and I think they'll do it responsibly after they've had the training class. I understand Senator Bohlke, Senator Matzke's zeal to control the 14- and 15-year-olds but, Senator Matzke, that person who harassed you on your sailboat, I'll bet it wasn't a 14- or 15-year-old. Senator Matzke acknowledged that. Most 14- and 15-year-olds can't get to the lake unless they're taken there by an adult. And we can't...we can't regulate everything, I understand that,