



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

State Lawmakers Hold Boating Safety Course

Sen. Carlucci

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State Lawmakers to Hold Boating Safety Course in Memory of Ossining Man Killed in Boating Accident

OSSINING, NY – 6/2/2018 -- State lawmakers, elected officials, and residents gathered on the Hudson River Saturday to talk about the importance of boating safety this summer.

"The 8-hour boating safety course my office is sponsoring today opens boating education up to residents for free and allows them to take a course that could save lives. This course is required under state law now because of legislation Assemblywoman Galef, Assemblyman Abinanti, and I fought for tirelessly following Bryan Johnson's death on the water," said Sen. David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester).

Sen. Carlucci, Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Westchester/Putnam), and Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Greenburgh/Mt. Pleasant) sponsored a boating safety course on Saturday in Bryan Johnson's memory at the Shattemuc Yacht Club in Ossining.

In June of 2012, Johnson, a 26-year-old from Ossining drowned to death in the waters off City Island in a boating prank gone wrong.

Police said Johnson jumped off the boat and went for a swim, but the boat pulled away without him, and when his friends returned they could not find him.

Johnson's body was found several days later.

"We as a family would hate to see another family go through this because it is not easy, and it does not go away. I would like to say thank you to Sen. Carlucci, Assemblywoman Galef, Assemblyman Abinanti and everyone who played a role in getting today's boating course ready," said Johnson's grandmother Thomasina Laidley Brown.

"Sen. Carlucci I compliment you on having this boating safety course. It means 50 more people know how to boat safely. I also want recognize Assemblyman Abinanti and Sen. Carlucci for their support getting legislation I sponsored signed into law, which mandates that every person born after 1996 has to take a boating safety certificate course," said Assemblywoman Galef.

About 50 people attended the 8-hour boating safety course taught by instructors with America's Boating Club of Westchester.

Their organization announced that 5 scholarships would be given out beginning next year in Johnson's memory to cover the cost of the course.

"America's Boating Club of Westchester is pleased to announce the creation of the Bryan Johnson Safe Boating Scholarship. It will be awarded yearly to 5 individuals and grant them free tuition to the America's Boating course, which teaches them boating safety and meets the requirements for New York state's certification. It is my belief these scholarships will help prevent tragedies like Mr. Johnson's and ensure Mr. Johnson's death was not in vain, said Anthony Reyes, Commander of America's Boating Club of Westchester.

"I want to thank everyone for putting this course together. I also want to thank Anthony Reyes with America's Boating Club of Westchester. I am very grateful for what they are doing with the scholarships, and that came as a surprise. I am sure my son is very happy today. I hope the people taking the course inside take it seriously, and maybe they can help someone else one day," said Johnson's mother Sheila Lilley.

"Safe boating requires skills that must be learned and practiced," said Assemblyman Abinanti. "Boating without the proper instruction and information is dangerous to the boater and everyone else on the water. Thanks to Shattemuc Yacht Club, and America's Boating Club of Westchester for their continuing efforts to increase safety on the water. "

The U.S. Coast Guard reported there were nearly 4,300 recreational boating accidents in 2017.

According to their report, the leading cause of fatalities in 2017 were drownings, and in more than half the cases people were not wearing life-jackets.

"What is most alarming about this report is that 81 percent of deaths occurred on boats where the operator did not receive boating safety instruction. When the driver had taken the course we offered today, that number was dramatically reduced to 14 percent," said Sen. Carlucci.

The U.S. Coast Guard has said the number of accidents and deaths on the water have decreased since 2016.