AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 59-21-85, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT CHILDREN UNDER SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE SHALL NOT OPERATE PERSONAL WATERCRAFT UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT; TO REQUIRE SUCH CHILDREN TO COMPLETE A SAFETY COURSE; TO AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES TO CONDUCT BOATING SAFETY COURSES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Section 59-21-85, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

59-21-85. (1) (a) No motorboat shall be operated by any person who is under the age of sixteen (16) years, unless he possesses a certificate as required under this section and is also accompanied by a parent, guardian or other person who is at least twenty-one (21) years of age and qualified and capable of operating the same.

(b) A motorboat may not be operated by any person born after June 30, 1980, unless the person has completed a course in boating safety conducted or approved by the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks or the Department of Marine Resources, and the person has in his immediate possession while operating a motorboat a certificate of satisfactory completion of the boating safety course.

(c) The requirement of possessing a certificate under this subsection shall not apply to any person operating a motorboat that is rented from a person engaged in the business of renting motorboats.

(2) Boating safety courses shall be held by the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks or the Department of Marine Resources, or instructors designated and approved by the
departments. The department * * * shall issue a certificate to each person who satisfactorily completes the boating safety course.

(3) In lieu of any other penalties provided for a violation of this chapter, a violation of this section is punishable by a fine of not less than Twenty-five Dollars ($25.00) nor more than Fifty Dollars ($50.00).

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2002.