

Submitter: Christine Cearnal  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: HB3006

From: Christine Cearnal  
House Bill 3006

House Judiciary,

I am writing to request an exception to HB 3006 for youth rowers in Oregon that is in line with the exception offered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

“33 CFR § 175.17 - Exemptions.

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§ 175.17 Exemptions.

(a) Canoes and kayaks 16 feet or more in length are exempted from the requirements for carriage of the additional throwable PFD required under § 175.15(b).

(b) Racing shells, rowing sculls, racing canoes, and racing kayaks are exempted from the requirements for carriage of any PFD required under § 175.15.”

As a parent of two youth rowers and as a former high school rower myself the safety of young people on the water is exceedingly important to me.

PFDs on the bodies of our young rowers do not increase their safety. Sculling and sweeping are sports in which oars tips are brought very close to the bodies of the athletes while they slide on moving seats on rails with their feet tied into shoes attached to the boat. They wear unisuits that are fitted snugly to their body to avoid entanglement as this can result in boat ejection and injury.

The long history of this sport includes many precautions to ensure the safety of young towers as they compete. Youth rowers' swimming abilities are assessed, coaches follow boats closely in safety launches and during practices boats are clustered together.

PFDs would create a safety risk to rowers and would increase the likelihood of injury with no real benefit to the young athletes. PFDs would essentially handicap Oregon rowers as their peers all row under the Coast Guard exception.

As parents we care enormously about our children’s safety thank you for considering

our testimony.

Christine Cearnal

Parent of two Oregon Rowing Unlimited rowers