

Submitter: Anna Choe
On Behalf Of: Youth Rowers in Oregon
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3006

I am a registered voter in Portland, OR. My 17 year old son rows competitively for Oregon Rowing Unlimited (ORU). I provide this testimony in opposition to the proposed legislation and believe there should be an exemption for youth rowers.

The proposed legislation is neither appropriate nor enhance the safety of rowers. The physical safety of rowers always comes first at his club (ORU) and at other Oregon clubs. Before my son was allowed on the water, he was required to pass a swim test. Only after certified results were provided to the coaches, was he allowed on the water without a PFD. Additionally, a launch boat driven by the coaches (with life vests and other safety gear) always accompanies the rowers when they are on the water. Further, PFDs on the bodies of our young rowers will 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. PFDs would create a safety risk to rowers and would increase the likelihood of injury with no enhanced safety to the young athletes. PFDs would essentially handicap Oregon rowers as their peers all row under the Coast Guard exception.

Sincerely,
Anna Choe