

Submitter: Amy Koski
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3006

I appreciate the intent and the wishes of keeping all of our children safe on our waterways. It is true that accidents happen and PFDs could save lives; however, an exemption must be added to allow for rowing teams to not wear a PFD while actively in a shell for their sport. The nature of the rowing stroke will be inhibited by a PFD and further can put the child at further risk of harm and drowning. The oars can get caught in the PFD and literally eject a child from the boat. This can cause great trauma to the child's hands, arms, chest, stomach. Further if the boat were to flip and the PFD were to be caught in one of the many rigors or oars or ... the child could be held underwater and actually drown because of the PFD itself. Rowing is a huge sport in the PNW and involves children aged 12- adults aged 65+. Our children will be hampered by this restriction and no longer competitive on the national stage (my son competed at the National regatta and placed 7th overall in his class). This type of national exposure will be ruined if they are forced to wear PFD while training. The stroke, their body position, all will be altered. It would be like asking a gymnast to wear a bubble suit in case they fall from the high bar. Not practical at all and a hindrance.

All rowers must pass a swimming efficiency test and have coaches in the water ready to aid at the drop of a dime. Further if you truly want to make our water ways safer — slow the boats down on sections of the Willamette. Then there wouldn't be so many wakes, speeding boats, and potential for injury.