

Submitter: ALEXANDER SCHOENEN

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Judiciary

Measure: HB3006

I am a parent of two youth rowers and have another child entering the sport soon. While I am supportive of PFD use in most situations, I have deep concerns about the proposed requirement that youth rowers wear PDFs. This will lead to an increase in serious injuries and does not increase the safety of our children. I respectfully request an exception to any proposed legislation for youth who are participating in rowing and sculling.

My biggest concern is that a pdf will INCREASE the chance of injury or harm while our children are rowing. The rowing motion involves moving parts including an oar which is repeatedly brought in close proximity to the torso. In the event of a capsize, it is likely that a pdf will complicate a rower's extraction from the boat, due to entanglement. Rowing shells are designed with features that allow an athlete to free themselves of the boat as easily as possible in the event of capsize, our children train for this exact situation so they do not get trapped under the shell. The requirement that rowers wear a pdf could put our children in increased danger.

Additionally, organized rowing programs are equipped with safety launches that contain lifejackets for the athletes. Rowing practices are closely supervised and the safety record for youth rowing programs nationwide is excellent. It is for these reasons that rowers are exempted nationwide from wearing PFDs while rowing, according to federal Coast Guard regulations.

While I applaud any initiatives to increase water safety, I do not believe that mandating that youth rowers wear PFDs will achieve a safer overall experience or environment.

Thank you,
Alexander Schoenen