

Submitter: Colin Eaton  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: HB3006

Dear House Committee on Judiciary and members of the community,

My name is Colin Eaton. I am a third-year medical student at OHSU. I am writing in support for HB 3006. I believe this bill will help save lives in Oregon's youth population.

Water safety has always been a part of my life. I grew up around water and have been swimming competitively since age 9. I have competed at U.S. national competitions and at the U.S. Olympic Team Trials for swimming. I have also previously worked for several years as a swimming instructor with children ages 3-18. My summers in Oregon were largely spent exploring the beautiful rivers, lakes, gorges, and waterways that Oregon has to offer.

Through these experiences I have witnessed firsthand several near-miss occurrences that could have resulted in drowning, all of which occurred in rivers or other bodies of water on public land. I was directly involved with assisting in two of these rescues. Both incidences could have been avoided had the individuals been wearing a PFD.

Further, data collected by OHSU shows that drowning is the 2nd leading cause of death in Oregon for children ages 0-4 years, and the 4th leading cause of death for those ages 5-18 years. Additionally, Oregon children drown at higher rates as compared to the rest of the U.S. as well as regionally. Oregon children drown at a 26% higher rate compared to the US overall, 72% greater than children in California, and 42% greater than Washington.

Sadly, drowning disproportionately impacts Oregon's communities of color. This pattern is also recognized nationally. Hispanic, Black, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska native children drown twice as often as non-Hispanic whites. I believe this bill will help to make progress in keeping these communities safe on the water.

The data above was compiled based on drowning deaths specifically. However, we know that for each fatal drowning, 2 children suffer a critical water submersion event, leaving many with lifelong disabilities and other impacts. Some of these events likely go unreported. I believe this bill will help to prevent some of these traumatizing critical water submersion events.

HB 3006 will help protect Oregon's children and teens by requiring PFD use for older

youth, and when children are floating on products that are currently exempted from Oregon regulation.

Sincerely,  
Colin Eaton