

Submitter: Anne Haas
On Behalf Of: Youth Rowers in Oregon
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3006

I am a parent of a youth rower and want to offer testimony on HB3006, with the goal request an exemption for youth rowers who participate in rowing clubs. There are a number of local rowing clubs in Oregon that teach youth the rowing sport of sculling and sweeping. Without an exemption for rowers, this bill will reduce the ability for youth in this sport to train safely and effectively. Requiring rowers to wear a PFD will put them at greater risk than they are without them. According to current federal coast guard regulations, rowers are exempted nationwide from wearing PFD's while rowing specifically due to the nature of the sport.

*Rowing involves moving parts including a sliding seat and oars repeatedly brought in close contact with the torso. Our rowers wear tight fitting leggings and tops without pockets to prevent getting caught on moving pieces. A bulky PFD with straps and clasps will be more likely to catch on these parts increasing the chances of an accident or extraction from the shell. Even small inflatable PDF have straps and clasps that can get tangled up with the oar.

* In the event of a capsize, which is extremely rare, rowing shells are designed with features that allow athletes to free themselves of the boat. Our rowers specifically wear rowing gear that facilitates this release. Adding a PFD greatly increases the chances of getting caught in the mechanics of the boat itself.

*Our organized rowing programs in Oregon are run with safety launches containing lifejackets for athletes and coaches who's sole job is to watch the rowers. Our teens are not on the water unsupervised and the safety record of our state's youth programs is excellent. In addition, our children must pass a mandatory survival swim test before joining these programs.

Thank you for considering my testimony.