

Submitter: Joseph Howell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3006

I have been involved with water sports all of my life. I had a close friend drown in a community pool when we were 10. I have assisted in rescuing and performing CPR on a child of 4 or 5. I have seen a number of families traumatized by drownings. My niece lost her fiance to drowning when she was in her 20's. People too often overestimate their capabilities in water, and the odds get worse when the water is below even 70 degrees. People floating down rivers on tubes and pool toys have been involved in quite a number of incidents that would have been much less perilous were they wearing a PFD. I strongly support the passing of this legislation to ensure that PFD's are worn by a larger group of people while floating down rivers. Currents can cause much bigger issues than just floating on a lake. You can bump into rocks and get knocked over or off of your floating device. I kayak hundreds of miles each year in the rivers and lakes here in Oregon and Washington and I know that the water temperature is seldom warm enough for most people to be in them for very much time. Wearing PFDs would extend the range of rescue possibilities by a considerable margin because people can remain afloat even when they don't have the strength to participate in keeping themselves afloat. For the sake of the many who are unaware of the level of risk, as well as being unaware of the limits of their capabilities, please pass this legislation to provide them with an extra layer of protection.