

Fredrick Webel
South Bristol
LD 1042

Subject: Testimony supporting LD 1042 – An Act to Require a Person Operating a Watercraft for Recreational Purposes to Ensure all Passengers Under 13 Years of Age Wear Coast Guard Approved Personal Flotation Devices.

As a lifelong coastal Maine recreational boater and supporter safe boating education I am writing to support LD 1042 – An Act to Require a Person Operating a Watercraft for Recreational Purposes to Ensure all Passengers Under 13 Years of Age Wear Coast Guard Approved Personal Flotation Devices (PFD).

I have struggled trying to explain to family and friends why, in Maine, there are inconsistencies in the regulations that apply to the wearing of a PFD by children between the ages of 12 and 13. Federal & State regulations diverge in coastal waters. U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Regulations require children under age 13 to wear a PFD, while Maine State law allows 11- and 12-year-olds to ride in a boat without wearing a personal flotation device. As one moves from “Federal Waters” to “State Waters” how do you answer a bright and aware 12 or 13-year-old who asks if they can now remove their PFD because “the law” allows it?

I strongly support this bill. I appreciate your time and consideration in this effort to make our young people not only safer on the water, but to also give them confidence that logic and reason are used to enact our laws and regulations.

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