



WAWENOCK SAIL AND POWER SQUADRON

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April 7, 2025

House of Representatives

Robert B. Hunt, Clerk

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.

It is my pleasure, as Commander of the Wawenock Sail and Power Squadron, to write in support of LD 1042. The Wawenock Sail and Power Squadron, also known as America's Boating Club of Mid Coast Maine, is a non-profit organization dedicated to boating safety and education. Our goal is to promote safe boating through education. In our classes, we stress the importance of always wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) for all ages. Boating accidents happen quickly, without time to don a PFD. The leading cause of fatalities on the water is drowning and it is often preventable. Studies reveal that the vast majority of drowning victims were not wearing a life jacket at the time of the accident. Personal flotation devices are a simple yet life-saving measure.

Maine is one of the few states that allows 11- and 12-year-olds to ride in a boat without wearing a personal flotation device. Maine has over 116,000 registered boats, not including kayaks, paddleboards, canoes, dinghies, and rowboats. LD 1042 would bring Maine into conformance with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Regulations requiring children under age 13 to wear a PFD. The law would protect children another two years while recreationally boating in Maine. It is ironic that Maine, with all its lakes, streams, and coastline, is more lenient than the USCG.

We, at the Wawenock Squadron, strongly support this bill. We appreciate your time and consideration in this important way to make our children safer on the water.

Sincerely yours,

Sharon L. Steele

Sharon L. Steele, Commander

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