

*Chesapeake Bay Yacht Clubs Association
Position Paper on Virginia Senate Bills 1061 and 909
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Statement, presented by Jacque Knight, Alexandria, VA
knightpassage@aol.com 703-780-7495*

The Chesapeake Bay Yacht Clubs Association is made up of 133 clubs in five states, including Virginia. These clubs represent an estimated 65,000 recreational boaters, and their bumper stickers read, "I Boat, I Vote."

So, you can understand why our members are very interested in legislation that affects not only the economy of but the safety of boat owners and their passengers. Many of those passengers are children. And, naturally, about half of the boat owners are fathers and grandfathers, or uncles. The other half of our boater members are mothers and grandmothers, or perhaps aunts of children. They know about boating safety. But members of CBYCA are concerned about those who either do not know about or do not routinely follow water safety rules for children on board boats where the youngsters are supposed to have fun and learn about the joys of our lakes, rivers and beautiful Bay. These are the children who might be their neighbors, or the friends of their children and grandchildren. Or, they might be close to you in some way. You will hear figures showing the low numbers of children who have lost their lives because they were not wearing Personal Flotation Devices. Remember, you cannot prove a negative, and we do not know how many have been saved because they were wearing life jackets. Why take a chance with the lives of children aboard boats?

The CBYCA position, as stated on our webpage, CBYCA.org, clearly states that the organization favors fair and reasonable regulations requiring use by children 12 and under aboard a vessel underway. The association also believes that boat owners or operators should be responsible for seeing that PFD's are placed on children who are on deck or otherwise outside a safe, enclosed cabin or cockpit area.

The bills introduced by Senator Lucas and Senator Norment have the support of the Chesapeake Bay Yacht clubs Association, and we hope this committee will act this year so that Virginia can no longer be identified as the only U. S. coastal state that does not require mandatory PFD use by young children. And, remember, "We Boat, We Vote."

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