

Committee on Children

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5273 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT REQUIRING CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF TWELVE TO WEAR
Title: PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES ON DOCKS, WHARFS AND PIERS.

Vote Date: 3/3/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/24/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Committee on Children

CO-SPONSORS OF THE BILL:

Rep. Gresko, 121st District
Sen. Perillo, 21st District
Rep. McGorty, 122nd District

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to require children under the age of 12 to wear flotation devices while on a dock, wharf, or pier. Due to concerns following drowning incidents in the state, this legislation attempts to prevent these tragedies and ensure child safety near large bodies of water.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

There is no substitute language.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Deputy House Speaker Joseph Gresko, 121st District: Rep. Gresko testified in support of H.B. 5273, which would require children under 12 to wear personal flotation devices on docks, wharfs, and piers, citing a recent drowning tragedy in Stratford. He emphasized that

the bill is intended as a safety and educational measure, using public access to life preservers and community awareness rather than strict enforcement.

McWeeney Aquatic Consulting, State Recreation Consultant and Owner Drew Michael McWeeney: Mr. McWeeney testified in support of H.B. 5273, emphasizing that requiring children under 12 to wear properly fitted personal flotation devices on docks, piers, and boats is a common-sense safety measure to prevent drowning. He also highlighted the importance of universal swimming instruction as a lifesaving skill and suggested that public-private partnerships could fund these initiatives without burdening taxpayers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

The Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association (CRPA), Executive Director Valerie Stolfi Collins: Ms. Collins expressed concerns about H.B. 5273, noting that the bill lacks clarity on what constitutes docks, wharfs, and piers and could create enforcement and liability challenges for municipalities. They emphasized that access to affordable swimming lessons through municipal programs is a more effective and practical approach to preventing drowning while maintaining children's ability to safely enjoy public recreational spaces.

Reported by: Mia Giglietti and Zachary Robinson Date: 3/9/2026