

Jane Schiff-Verre
So Portland
LD 716
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My name is Jane Schiff-Verre. I'm a resident of So Portland.

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and members of the committee" I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to speak today in support of LD 716, An Act to Restrict the Hunting of Coyotes at a time when Coyote parents are nurturing their pups and teaching them vital survival skills. "

When one or both parents are killed during this crucial period, their family structure is torn apart creating extensive chaos in an otherwise orderly family unit. Chaos can, in turn, affect their relationship with our farmers in a negative way. A healthy, respectful relationship between farmer and coyote can only bring positive outcomes for both.

The passage of this historic bill has a personal meaning for me. It relates to the rapidly increasing epidemic of Lyme disease. Coyotes can have a powerful affect tempering this epidemic when they are allowed to do what they are raised to do...hunt rodent prey, the main carriers of the Lyme bacteria.

Today I speak before you as an informed citizen, a wife, mother and twenty-eight year survivor of Lyme disease. By the time the infection was a confirmed, the bacteria had become deeply embedded in my joints, organs and brain affecting my ability to carry on full time work as an educational technician due to residual physical impairment, chronic fatigue and hours of rehabilitation. Activities that once brought vibrancy, stability and joy into my life and my family were replaced by a host of these debilitating symptoms. For those of you who know someone who has experienced late stages of Lyme disease, you understand how this disease can cause physical and emotional distress. You may also be able to relate to the challenging impact it can have on the lives of your loved ones.

It is a known fact that Lyme disease has radically increased in Maine. Where once our woodlands, backyards and parks were safe places to visit without fear becoming infected, they have now become breeding places for deer ticks.

I am fortunate to have survived Lyme disease. Many do not, especially children, young people and even family pets.

The very animals that can help to reverse the Lyme epidemic are the ones that are being systematically exploited.

There is hope for reducing the spread of tick born diseases. It lies with you today with the passage of this bill.

For coyotes to be beneficial to our health, our ecosystem, and our farmers ... they need to stay alive.

Thank you.