

Susan Cottle
China
LD 716

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee:

I am writing this testimony in support of LD 716, An Act to Restrict the Hunting of Coyotes.

I understand why some folks are concerned about making any change to our hunting laws. There is fear at times of what a change may mean. And we need to respect different views. Coming from a family of life-long members of the NRA and SAM, as well as being someone who cares deeply about Maine's landscape and wildlife, I respect people who also care about Maine and accept we don't all see things the same way. Difference helps makes us stronger...provided we listen and learn from each other to make good decisions.

And when we make decisions, I hope they will be based on cold facts, not just experiences. Some important facts to consider when considering this bill include:

- Are we keeping our hunting practices so as to cause the least harm and the most good? Most agree that it cannot be good to have an animal suffer, and killing parents of young that cannot take care of themselves creates a significant amount of suffering—it's not in keeping with our general practices of ensuring we are harvesting wildlife in a reasonable fashion. My father, a life-long NRA member and hunter is the man who taught me this. This bill aims to address that point.

- If we need to provide more time to harvest a given species—more time than a limited season, what data is there demonstrating that need? I am not aware of data that points to a need for year-round harvesting of coyotes, meaning I am not aware of data that demonstrate that the proposed change in season will not suffice for managing the coyote population. I encourage your committee to seek that data from those who do that research and can provide an objective answer—not just personal stories that express fear and threats for which there is not supporting data.

There are other points to consider that are covered by others who support this bill concerning the important ecological benefits that coyotes provide, so I shall not repeat those. I don't think anyone is claiming coyotes are nothing but good for everyone all the time everywhere. But there do appear to be some who see coyotes as only bad. To see any animal as all good or all bad is not helpful. I hope you will not be swayed that the extreme views of any animal—extreme beliefs do not help us make good decisions. But I shall repeat my plea for consideration of science, data, and logic. Thank you for your consideration and your service to our state.