

Jared Bornstein
Support for LD 2052

Good afternoon Representative Landry, Senator LaFountain and the rest of the fantastic members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. My name is Jared Bornstein, I have come before you in the past representing many different things, but today I am coming to represent hope. Not hope for you or I, hope for the children of Maine who are experiencing critical illness.

I don't remember exactly what I was researching, but I came across the youth adventure hunt statute last year, it gives two moose permits to organizations who serve youth experiencing critical illness. These organizations are nation-wide and do a fantastic job serving our children of America. Though, when I asked around about this program 90% of the folks I asked had no idea we were doing this. I felt embarrassment. I was embarrassed that I didn't know about the program, that many relevant leaders didn't know, that Maine didn't know and most of all that our fellow American's didn't know. We can fix that today.

The bill before you, LD 2052 adds three moose permits to the two that already are given to Hunt of a Lifetime and Catch a Dream Foundation. This law stipulates that the permits are given to a Maine organization to take Maine kids out. This is more important than most folks know. Annually in Maine there are 60 new cases of pediatric cancer. Though most of the cancer treatment is received in Portland, these kids and their families are from every corner of our state. This brings me to the saddest part of my testimony: Imagine you grow up watching your mom and dad go out and hunt for Deer, Bear, Moose or something else. You idolize them. You are confused and amazed when your dad wanders off into the woods and comes back with dinner. He is your hero and you want to be just like him. You are patient, your parent's take you out with them but nothing so serious because they want you to be 12 years old before you carry a rifle. Your 12th birthday is in August, your parents give you a brand new .243 to go deer hunting with. At your yearly doctor exam in October you complain of headaches which the doctor wants to run some tests on. 36 hours later you've been diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor and are in a fight for your life. Instead of being in the blind with mom and dad on opening day, you are in Portland being cared for diligently by the folks at the Maine Children's

Cancer Program. Instead of a childhood filled with fun and time in the outdoors you stare at walls with tubes in your arm hoping you will live. Hunting is now a distant dream that seems so impossible.

This story is fictitious, but it is informed by the dozen or so stories from the families who we have been in contact with. It really happens that fast and their lives really change that drastically. This happens to kids, Maine kids. 60 times a year. Allocating three Moose permits and taking three of them on a hunt is the least any of us can do. In this room right now some of us are Democrats, some of us are Republicans and there are no doubt some unenrolled voters. Right now, I want to invite you to set aside politics and partisanship and all of the noise that hums in the background of our lives. Do not vote for this bill as republicans or democrats. Do not vote for this bill as an individual. Instead, vote for this bill as a Mainer. Someone who might not have everything you want, but will give the shirt off their back to the fellow who needs it more than you. Today you get the best of both worlds. You get to vote for this bill, it costs nothing and there is no downside. You just get to do something good that each year 3 more children who have suffered more in their so far short lives than anyone should ever suffer in a lifetime will remember and thank you for.