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Maine H.P. 455 LD No. 716

Good afternoon, committee members. My name is Jamie Arute, a proud Mainer who cherishes our state's wild landscapes and the balance of its ecosystems.

I'm here to urge you to establish a defined hunting season for coyotes in Maine—a change that honors both our hunting traditions and the ethical responsibility we owe our wildlife.

Coyotes are not pests to be eradicated; they're vital players in our environment. They control rodents, clean up carrion, and maintain the health of our forests and fields. Yet, Maine's year-round, no-limit policy has turned their pursuit into something reckless—pups shot for fun, animals run down by snowmobiles and trucks. This isn't hunting. It's chaos. It disrespects the code of ethical hunters like me, who believe a kill must have purpose—whether for food, protection, or balance—not just thrill.

A hunting season, set with science in mind, would protect coyotes during their breeding and rearing months, ensuring their populations stay resilient while still allowing us to manage them. Look at deer or bear seasons: they work because they're deliberate, not open-ended. Coyotes deserve that same respect. A season would curb excess while preserving their ecological role—a role we lost when wolves vanished.

I've seen the blood-stained snow from joyrides, heard the boasts of kills without reason. It's not who we are as Mainers. We're stewards of this land, not destroyers. A coyote season isn't about weakness—it's about strength, discipline, and pride in doing right by nature. Please, let's take this step. Set a season. Restore the balance. Thank you.