

Support of LD 1322

Good Morning my name is Matt Fournier and I live in Richmond Maine. I Am here today As the President of the Maine Sporting Dog Association, As a Registered Maine guide, A houndsman, a lifelong hunter and as a father in support of LD1322.

It is no secret that youth hunting numbers have been declining for years and continue to decline. Im here today urging everyone to vote in favour of this Bill. Any thing we can do to involve youth hunters is a must. My oldest son is currently 16 and I remember several youth bear days sitting in a blind and he asked "Dad why can't we just run the hounds" well I said its against the law to run them on youth day. "But why" He asked. I really didn't have a good answer for him. But it got me thinking why shouldn't we have a youth hound day.

Some of the bait hunters may have an issue with running hounds on the current youth day so I would suggest the Saturday before the current youth over bait. After all the Hounds are already in the woods this day and it wont take away from the current bait season.

Another thing I would like to see added to this law is that guides can't charge a fee for this day. I don't want this to turn into just kids with parents that can afford to pay for a hunt that participate. I want to see as many kids as possible have an opportunity to participate in a hound hunt and to see what its all about.

I'm not sure who will be here today opposed to expanded youth hunting but Im willing to bet they have never participated in a hound hunt. Humane society of the united states has painted a horrible picture and lies to the public about what takes place on a hunt. Hound hunting is not some brutal blood sport it is more like a well orchestrated ballet. The tracking collars we use are a recovery tool so that we can recover the hounds after a hunt that may have fallen behind in a race. Hunting with dogs has been around since man kind first domesticated wolves. It is believed they were in fact

domesticated to aid man with hunting and have been used for this purpose since. Hunting with hounds in Maine gives the opportunity to selectively harvest bears and hound hunting is the only true form of catch and release hunting. I would be more than happy to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.