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Maine - the way life should be or so the slogan goes. I was born and grew up in Maine and still have property here. Unfortunately, over the course of my life, this slogan has not been the reality in terms of the compassion, care and stewardship of Maine's spectacular and diverse wildlife.

You have an opportunity to begin to change that with this important bill, LD814.

There may be no more persecuted, misunderstood and cruelly slaughtered being than the coyote. Beautiful, intelligent, loyal and fiercely family oriented, the coyote partners for life. In fact, wildlife biologists have confirmed that coyotes remain completely faithful to their mate for the duration of their life never straying, ever. This behavior has not been observed in any other canid. In fact, it is rarely observed in humans. And what do we call this behavior in humans? Usually we call it love and devotion.

The spring pupping season is a very important time for coyote clans. Typically only one female in an extended family group will have pups. By ending the killing of coyotes from April through September, LD814 recognizes the critical role both coyote parents play in raising their young and the importance of maintaining the coyote social and family structure. Without both parents, coyote pups have slim chances of survival. Left vulnerable or on their own if one or both parents are killed, the chances of human interaction increases as pups make a desperate search for food. Killing coyotes during this time period simply amounts to wildlife abuse.

Coyotes are Maine's keystone predator and they play a pivotal role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Of course, the greatest threat to wildlife maintaining a stable ecosystem is persecution and exploitation by humans. In a stable ecosystem, coyotes practice strict reproduction, they protect their territory from other predators, they hunt diverse prey and they play an important role in rodent control. Forward thinking farmers in states including Oregon have also learned how coyotes can play an important role in not only keeping predators away from farms but also in managing deer behavior.

Across then nation, communities are learning how to successfully co-exist with coyotes as the coyotes adapt to rapid habitat loss due to human's continued expansion into all wild areas. Urban coyotes now live in all 50 states. Stewardship, education and appropriate interaction is the key to successful co-existence. The killing and slaughter of coyotes has only resulted in an ecosystem out of balance and the horrific suffering and abuse of wildlife. It is time for Maine to step up and pass LD814. Thank you.