

March 2, 2020

The Senate Committee on Rules and Executive Appointments

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

Re: Veterinary Support for SB 588 to prohibit coyote killing contests in Oregon

Dear Chair Burdick and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Cierra Buer. I have a veterinary practice in Prineville, Oregon, and also serve as Assistant Professor in the Veterinary Technician Program at Central Oregon Community College. I am writing today in support of SB 588 to prohibit coyote killing contests in Oregon.

I live in a part of the state where raising livestock is a way of life, and I understand the need to keep livestock safe from native carnivores. I own farm animals myself. The first point I would make, as both a veterinarian and an owner of farm animals, is that it is false to claim killing contests are somehow an effective way to keep animals safe from depredation. It is my responsibility as a livestock owner to keep my animals safe. I would never trust their safety to a small group of individuals who thrill in killing as many animals as possible.

Veterinary professionals are the most qualified assessors of animal health and well-being. We work daily to minimize the pain and suffering that animals experience. And it is difficult to imagine a more callous disregard for animal suffering than that displayed during killing contests, where the only objective is to kill as many animals as possible to win a prize.

Indiscriminately killing large numbers of animals for prizes is done without regard for animal suffering. For example, the random killing of coyotes can cause orphaning of dependent pups, who are left to succumb to exposure, predation, or a slow and excruciating death by starvation. In online forums and social media posts and videos, killing contest participants revel in the chance to inflict a "gut shot" on coyotes, which causes terrible injuries and a prolonged, agonizing death. Coyote killing contests are also the antithesis of modern wildlife management science, which tells us that ecosystems are disrupted when many animals in a localized area are indiscriminately removed. Although the principles of carnivore biology teach us that coyotes control their own numbers according to available habitat and food, participants in wildlife killing contests often make the specious claim they are aiding livestock farmers with coyote "population control." Scientific research indicates that although coyote numbers may temporarily decline after a killing contest, they ultimately increase in numbers resulting from decreased competition for mates and resources, more breeding, and the migration of other coyotes into the area. *Oregon Small Farm News* has also cited recent

research finding that killing resident, non-predating coyotes in proximity to livestock will only cause external, potentially predating coyotes to move into the area.

Other cash-competitive blood sports involving animals, such as dogfighting and cockfighting, are among the most condemned of all animal welfare violations nationally. Consequently, they have strong laws and penalties against them in all 50 states, including Oregon.

In summary, coyote killing contests are cruel and wasteful. They do not reflect the humane values or the appreciation for wildlife most Oregonians feel, nor do they comport with our state's ethical hunting principles of sportsmanship and fair chase. With this in mind, as a longtime Oregon veterinary professional in good standing, I ask for your support of SB 588 to end these inhumane contests in our great state. Thank you for your time and leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Dr. Cierra Buer