

We have reached a time in our nation's history where we are rejecting the oppression, marginalization, exploitation, and abuse of fellow humans, recognizing that they are just that - fellow humans. Not everyone extends the same regard to nonhuman animals, such that they would recognize a moral let alone legal reason to extend them similar concern. Whether nonhuman animals such as coyotes are deserving of moral consideration or moral rights is not a debate that will be settled under the auspices of this bill and, although I am personally of the mind to answer in the affirmative on both accounts, this is not a point I intend to press here. Instead I make a simpler and more basic appeal to plain human decency. To take a life of any form, for any reason, is a serious matter - to do so for sport, pleasure, or glory is indefensible. Animals are not tennis balls or checker pieces- they are organisms who think, feel, and relate, as we do (if perhaps in their own ways). Why, I ask, should anyone presume to believe they are entitled to take other lives at their whim?

Continuing to permit killing contests sanctions and perpetuates cruelty, bloodlust, and hatred, at a time when our society needs to move toward empathy, kindness, and mutual respect for others. We face many delicate and complex policy questions today - this is not one of them. There is no reason and no excuse why coyote killing contests ought to remain legal.