

Testimony on HB 2728  
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This bill has almost nothing to do with coyotes. Reams of testimony about coyote population dynamics, the role of coyotes in the ecosystems, public surveys and lectures about morality ONLY hide the real essence of this bill.

Which is one small, but very organized and vocal, subset of the population attempting to tell another group that they disagree with something and therefore it must be outlawed and criminalized. Mob rule. Bullying. Simply because you don't agree with something doesn't give you the right to outlaw it. The U.S. and Oregon Constitutions protects all kinds of speech and activity that others don't like, and this situation is no different.

The bill is a laser focus on the urban-rural divide in Oregon. Why do some people feel the need to dictate to others that they don't even know, how to live? Voluntary contests? Outlawed? Really? Just as some people are disgusted by nude dancing, it is legal under the First Amendment. Don't like it? Don't go looking at it. Nobody is forced to watch or participate in a coyote contest. Leave the citizens, primarily in eastern Oregon, who care to participate alone. Nobody is being harmed.

I have previously testified in opposition to this bill in 2019 and 2020. It was very refreshing to see the outpouring of opposition on the 2/9/21 hearing from Harney County residents who are most directly impacted by this bill. They told it like it is, and the Legislature should listen to them, for they spoke the truth.

What is the difference between a coyote contest and a fishing derby? I can't see any difference. Why are fishing contests to be allowed, but coyote contests banned? A very slippery slope we're on.

With 300,000 + coyotes in Oregon, the impact of taking a few hundred in contests means zero in the big scheme. Bill supporters say killing coyotes only makes more coyotes. Well to coyote lovers that should be a good thing. It is legal to hunt coyotes every day of the year, this bill is simply saying you can't have any fun while doing so. Is this a problem we need to solve with a new law?

With a pandemic, massive wildfire destruction, homelessness, lawlessness, closed schools and hundreds of destroyed businesses, is a bill to outlaw coyote contests really necessary? This bill is a classic case of a solution looking for a problem. There is honestly no need for this bill.

Leave the good people of Harney County and eastern Oregon alone. If anything needs to be killed, its HB-2728.