

This legislation will prevent a small minority of the population from recklessly slaughtering coyotes. Hunter and former Chairman of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission Mike Finley has condemned wildlife killing contests, calling them “slaughter fests” and “stomach-turning examples of wanton waste.” Killing contests are a bloodsport like dogfighting and cockfighting. Killing coyotes for thrills and prizes—with no respect for their intrinsic or ecological value—is senseless violence and waste. Killing contests damage the reputation of responsible hunters by violating fundamental hunting ethics. Countless animals are injured or orphaned during killing contests. The events put non-target species (including imperiled wolves) at risk. Seven states have prohibited wildlife killing contests. Wildlife killing contests are still legal in 40+ U.S. states, but Americans are increasingly demanding an end to this bloodsport as the events come to light. Recent polling of Oregon voters found that a solid majority support an end to coyote killing contests in the state. There is no scientific evidence that indiscriminately killing coyotes reduces their populations, increases populations of game animals like deer, or protects livestock. Randomly killing coyotes disrupts their pack structure, which can increase their populations and increase conflicts with coyotes. Preventing conflicts with the use of humane, non-lethal methods is more effective. Coyotes play an important ecological role in healthy ecosystems. They reduce rabbit and rodent populations, clean up animal carcasses, and increase biodiversity. This bill is not a ban on hunting and does not impact other laws. Individuals will still be allowed to hunt coyotes according to state laws. HB 2728 does not prohibit fishing tournaments or affect laws related to lethal control of specific, problem-causing coyotes. Oregon’s wildlife is managed in trust for all Oregonians. It is a grave violation of the state’s duty to allow individuals to wantonly kill Oregon’s wildlife as part of a cruel blood sport.