

Public Policy Position
HB 4554 and SB 366

The Animal Law Section is a voluntary membership section of the State Bar of Michigan, comprised of 256 members. The Animal Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan and the position expressed herein is that of the Animal Law Section only and not the State Bar of Michigan. To date, the State Bar does not have a position on this item.

The Animal Law Section has a public policy decision-making body with 15 members. On September 11, 2025, the Section adopted its position after an electronic discussion and vote. 15 members voted in favor of the Section's position, 0 members voted against this position, 0 members abstained, 0 members did not vote.

Oppose

Explanation:

The authority to set hunting seasons in Michigan rests with the Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC). In 2024, the NRC passed Wildlife Conservation Order No. 1. Among other things, the Order provided for a shortened coyote hunting season. The Order reduced the season to nine months, prohibiting hunting between April 15 and July 15 when female coyotes have dependent young. The Animal Law Section supported this change.

Michigan United Conservation Clubs and the Michigan Trappers and Predator Callers Association challenged the DNR's decision in court, but in June 2025, the court found in favor of the DNR, holding that the DNR made a lawful decision based on sound science. These bills to reinstate a year-long coyote hunting season were introduced shortly after the court issued its decision.

The Animal Law Section opposes these bills. The shortened coyote hunting season is consistent with other hunting seasons that do not allow hunting during breeding season, which can result in dependent young suffering and dying if their mother is killed. Although proponents of a year-round hunt argue that it is necessary to control the coyote population, DNR wildlife biologist Barbara Avers testified before the NRC and said that a year-round hunt would not likely impact the coyote population.

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