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Reader's view: Nevada residents enjoy freedom to choose pets

Thanks for the heartwarming Robin Washington column, "A what in Proctor? Cougar story ends on sad note," in the Feb. 1 News Tribune.

As a private owner of many species of exotic cats, including a female cougar named Coogie, I could relate. Cougars are the biggest of small cats, meaning the biggest wild cat that can purr. They are extremely athletic and the top of the fridge is no match. The biggest cats, such as lions and tigers, are much more laid-back and less likely to be flying through the air.

The family in the column got their wonderful cougar in 1993, when animal laws were not as constricting as they are now.

It was extremely sad to read there recently were no veterinarians treating exotic pets. It is no surprise; the exotic animal bans eliminated the need for new exotic veterinarians.

I am fortunate to live in Nevada, where we still have freedom to choose what kind of pet to love and cherish. When Coogie got sick and needed urgent care, our local veterinarian referred us to a city vet more experienced with exotics. When it was time to remove Coogie's stitches, our local vet did it, and while at the hospital, Coogie became friends with a tiny Chihuahua who just had surgery done, too.

When one of our tigresses, Pebbles, needed medical intervention, our local veterinarian was there for her, willing to help and improvise when the transport cage was wider than the hospital door.

After reading the column, I was sure grateful to be living in Nevada with more exotic pet-friendly laws and wonderful veterinarians who put animals first.

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The writer is president of Responsible Exotic Animal Ownership.

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