

PA13-259

HB5277

House	2682-2714	33
Public Safety	65-79, 98-120, 128-162, 164-165, 179, 180, 238- 263	103
Senate	5184-5209	26
		162

H - 1157

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VOL.56
PART 8
2370 - 2742**

would the Clerk please announce the tally and give me back my gavel, please.

THE CLERK:

Bill 5072.

Total number voting	145
Necessary for adoption	73
Those voting Yea	107
Those voting Nay	38
Those absent and not voting	5.

(Speaker Sharkey in the Chair.)

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill passes.

How many amendments do we have on this bill?

None? We don't. Wow.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 262.

THE CLERK:

Calendar Number 262 on page 51, favorable report of the Joint Senate Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding, Substitute House Bill 5277, AN ACT CONCERNING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question is on acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

You have the floor, sir.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The bill that's before us will legalize the sport of MMA or mixed martial arts subject to regulation by DESPP. The bill also requires medical and safety regulations similar to those for professional boxing. MMA, just for a background, is a skilled sport in which competitors combine with martial arts including wrestling, boxing, karate, kick-boxing, all of which are individually legal in the state of Connecticut. Also, the unified rules of MMA have been adopted in 46 states, Canada and dozens of countries around the world which have set those standards.

If this bill is enacted, the commissioner must adopt regulations, conduct, safety and supervision of mixed martial arts, the matches, including the

licensing of match sponsors and participants and also set reasonable license fee promoters, participants and officials. Further, fighter safety has been a paramount concern to a number of individuals in this room. This sport underscores why states need to regulate MMA and not allow matches to go unregulated. A recent John Hopkins shows of 635 mixed martial matches determined that injury rates in a regulated sport such as this are similar to other, contact professional sports. The overall risks of critical sports-related injuries remain low.

UFC has been and is involved with numerous activities and public awareness campaigns including many anti-bullying efforts aimed at young people. UFC and MMA is the fastest growing sport in the world right now particularly among young people. Hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents are already watching UFC events on pay-per-view, cable television, Fox Network, MMA gyms, that could be found throughout our state and are already at our two Native American casinos. Mr. Speaker, from the economic side of it, the projection from figures from the Xcel Center in Hartford alone shows a spin-off of revenue for hotels, restaurants, parking and other discretionary items to

the city of approximately about three-quarters of a million dollars or more. The Xcel Center estimates that the five percent revenue of the state to the can be as high as \$350,000 per Xcel event. The cost to host such of an event are passed on to the promoters so the impact to the state is nothing.

On the negative side of the issue, there has been some concerns from some of the unions out there, Mr. Speaker, where I asked MMA officials and union officials to talk about some issues that they had in New York and Las Vegas. Hopefully, those talks will continue and there will be some resolution to that. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that people may say that this is a violent sport. That's why we need to regulate it. I also could submit to you that we, as a Legislature, could say -- we as a elected officials sometimes could be a violent sport, Mr. Speaker. This chamber can so well be. So I don't like to draw that analogy between mixed martial arts and between us as elected officials, but sometimes I think the art of the politics is more dangerous than the art of mixed martial arts. I know that this is bill that has come forward from legislators from Hartford and Bridgeport. For some reason, I don't know why I have to take out

that bill and those legislators from Hartford and Bridgeport asked me to take out the bill, but here we are. Here I am.

I like that very much, Mr. Butler.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you very much, sir.

Will you remark? Will you remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Giegler of the 138th, you have the floor, madam.

REP. GIEGLER (138th):

Thank you, Mr. Chairman -- Mr. Speaker.

The Chairman of the Public Safety Committee has given a very comprehensive overview of the bill before us. It's a bill that we passed out of the House last year. It has -- it is a growing competitive sport and as he alluded to, there are 100 countries that currently have MMA and there are also 48 states. Right now, it's pending in the state of New York which would leave only Connecticut unregulated. It will have a positive impact on our state's economy, as we heard from not only the entertainment industry, but we heard from lodging. We heard from restaurants. And

it's also with the licensing of the fighters, we will be getting licensing fees.

The -- currently, because there are no rules or regulations, there tends to be more injury. By regulating this sport, we are minimizing the injuries and we've seen information from the British Journal about the minimizing of certain injuries more in the terms of the lacerations and facial injuries with boxing having sustained even more injuries that we're seeing in mixed martial arts. Currently, there are training facilities that are being opened within our state instructing all ages of children in this field. With all that we've heard, and as my chairman alluded to, the only that spoke against it was the unions from Las Vegas, but otherwise, all that came before us, were all supportive of it. So I urge my colleagues support.

Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam.

Will you remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Carter of the 2nd District.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

When I saw this bill coming on the go list, I've got to be honest, I had huge reservations. You know, one thing we haven't talked about and we should in this chamber at some point, is the role of violence in our society. I understand that they're already out there doing this sport and I know that it's something that does need to be regulated to make sure that people aren't being injured, but I do think that this points to an overall broader issue with what we're doing in this state by allowing these kinds of sports to take place. You know, this has been my experience that this is much more than boxing and it's something although it happens it doesn't mean that we have to condone it.

And I guess that's been my -- that's been my struggle as this bill came along. I almost felt like a vote in favor of this would be condoning it. Now, I'm not going to go that route. Obviously, I'm going to support this bill because I do believe that we should regulate it for the safety purposes, but I just want to make sure that I make the comments known that we really should be taking a look at what we support in our society and in our state with respect to violent activities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Yaccarino of the 87th District.

REP. YACCARINO (87th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in support of this bill. I serve in public safety and I thank to thank Representative Dargan, the chair of the committee and Representative Giegler, the ranking member of the committee. This came before us last year and this year. For all the reference that Representative Dargan and Representative Giegler, but also for jobs and for the local community centers. It's very important for discipline and young, men and women to get involved. As far as the violence, football is actually much for violent than MMA. I am a boxing supporter, a boxing fan, but the fact is we need the jobs for Hartford, for Bridgeport and also the restaurants and all the extra activities. So I support it fully and for the income tax for the state of Connecticut. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Larry Miller of the 122nd. You have the floor, sir.

REP. MILLER (122nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have mixed emotions on this bill. We have the federal government looking into ways to stop head injuries in the Professional Football League as well as on the college level. These martial arts type of bouts are pretty nasty. I guess it's probably because we live in a very -- a society that promotes violence, whether it's the movies, the television or the games that the kids play on their videos. So I'm not sure just what to do with this thing because I did a get a couple letters from constituents who warned me that this could be something that could cause injury to people and we shouldn't be supporting sports that could injure individual people that are going into the battle with another person in a bout.

The one thing I also have a problem with is the fact once in a while I will put on the television to watch one of these fights and I just wonder how skilled the referees are when some guy is pummeled on

the floor and the referee is standing there and after about three minutes, he decides to pull him off and say that's enough. So there is a lot of liability involved here. Whether we're the only state in the state that doesn't have it, I think we've got to take a good look at it and maybe it is something that people want. But again, the liability aspects of it I have a little problem. So I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Hovey of the 112th, you have the floor, madam.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you, a couple of questions to the proponent of the legislation.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan, please prepare yourself.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, sir.

It is an interesting phenomena that this sweet Representative over there is the one who brought out

this bill. But that having been said, through you, Mr. Speaker, is there something in this legislation that requires protective gear for the individuals who are participating. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Hovey, just to be clear, are you speaking Representative Dargan as the sweet Representative? I'm not sure --

REP. HOVEY (112th):

I am, sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

-- we have the same person in mind.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Obviously, we've had different experiences.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Apparently.

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The good Representative has good taste so I agree with her.

Really, there is no protective gear. They wear really light gloves and some other protective gear, but there is not protective gear involved in this sport. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So just to be clear, through you, Mr. Speaker, there is no protective head gear that's used in this sport like there is in boxing bouts. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, on a professional level, too, in boxing, there is no head gear involved. On the amateur side of boxing and on MMA within our youth, there is more protection for those individuals. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I thank the gentleman for his answer. You know, Mr. Speaker, maybe a year ago, I might have had a different perspective on this legislation, but in

this last year, there have been a tremendous amount of differing events that have occurred that have I think caused all of us and especially should have caused the state of Connecticut to take pause when it comes to our condoning of violence in our society. And this is one more piece of that picture, I believe. Along with violent video games, this kind of activity is just absolute brutalization of another human being. I recently had the opportunity or it was imposed on me to observe one of these matches on television and it was so violent I actually left the restaurant and went somewhere else.

This is really the kind of back to the Roman times of people watching and viewing the brutalization of another human being and I personally find it disgusting. I think that we, as a society, really need to look at this activity and the condoning of it. The fact that we would be introducing children to this kind of activity I think -- you know, children are not able to discriminate between some activities and managing anger and all of that. They're not developed emotionally to be able to handle it. I don't think it's good for the psyche and I think that, you know, in the day that we are spending so much time talking

about closed-head injury, brain injury. We just have had a lot of new information come out about footballs players and that closed-head injury and how it impacts their lives much later.

We really need to be much more thoughtful. This is not just a way of managing a particular sport. I don't know -- this is in my mind a blood sport and I don't believe that Connecticut has a place for it.

Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam.

Will you remark? Will you remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Rovero of the 51st, you have the floor, sir.

REP. ROVERO (51st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to speak in support of this bill and I'd like to thank Chairman Dargan for bringing this bill forward. In fact, I hope that the first MMA match we have in Connecticut will involve Mr. Dargan being in the ring. But all kidding aside, I have three grandchildren that play hockey. They play throughout the United States and throughout the world.

I watch every pro hockey game that I can watch. Connecticut supports hockey 100 percent and I can't see that there is any more violence in this sport than there is in the sport of hockey. I will contend that there is some violence in it, but if we're going to ban this sport, I think we should ban football, hockey and the other sports that have the violence in it.

So with that being said, I support this bill 100 percent. And thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative D'Amelio of the 71st, you have the floor, sir.

REP. D'AMELIO (71st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, like many people in this chamber, I have reservations on this bill, but I think the question we should be asking ourselves is not should we prohibit it because it's already it. Should we regulate it is the question. In the greater Waterbury area, there are several mixed martial arts places that are teaching our young kids the art of this sport.

They have minimal contact, but nonetheless, they're here. They're here in our society. We do have matches at our casinos that are heavily attended. You could through pay-per-view buy any of these matches that are out there or you could watch it on some of our local channels.

So the question is do we regulate it? And I think we should. I think by regulating it, we could have some type of control over it as a state and we could, you know, visit this in the future to see if there are some safeguards that should be put in place. But it's throughout this country. I think New York is the only other state that's debating this very issue as we are. So the question isn't should we prohibit it because it's here. Our youth are participating in this sport and I think they will served better to have regulation over this sport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Miner of the 66th.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to associate my comments with those of Representative Hovey. Like many people in this chamber, I think we've all been touched by what's occurred in the state of Connecticut and I understand that this in the eyes of some is about regulation, but I don't know how you can separate regulation from what this activity is. This is not -- with all due respect to the gentleman that just spoke, this is not like hockey. It's not like football. It's not even like wrestling where someone gets issued a point for pinning someone. This legitimatizing -- making legitimate the art of really aggressively abusing another human being and whether we think the emotional connection to that is or is not being made between our youth and these activities, I think history has shown us that it has. So while I understand that this in the eyes of some is about regulation, I think for purposes of today I feel a lot voting against this bill not because I'm against regulation. I think adopting this kind of activity in the state of Connecticut for its economic benefit or anything else is not the direction we should be going. We should be trying to get people to go out fishing, hiking, enjoyable things rather than watching television or

taking them to watch this kind of an activity for a fee. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Cafero, the Distinguished Minority Leader, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CAFERO (142rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, like Representative D'Amelio have mixed emotions and Representative Hovey and Representative Miner about this sport. You know, there are a lot of sports and activities in this state that aren't all of our cup of teas. I don't -- I'm not a fan of mixed martial arts, but I realize that first of all the fact is it does exist. I know both my sons participate in wrestling and to my wife, that was the most barbaric sport in the world especially when her son was wrestling. There was many high school matches where we had to usher my wife out of the gymnasium because she was screaming "Get off my son."

But what has been stated is that there are various mixed martial arts activities that take place in this state currently and I'm wondering -- a question through you to Representative Dargan, if I

may, Mr. Speaker, and that would be through you, sir, if by passage of this bill, would the State have jurisdiction over, say, camps or schools that teach mixed martial arts with regard to regulating the activities that goes on in those schools or classes or lessons throughout the state. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

That's an excellent question because there is a question of differentiating amateur and professional. We had this issue before when we were dealing with boxing when we regulated that and when we do it on an amateur level and we don't want to impact the different groups around the state that hold these facilities already, whether it's one Judo or wrestling or a number of all them combined together. So this will just deal with regulations for professional use at either one of the facilities, the Xcel or Webster. They're already somewhat regulated at our two Native American casinos when they have events down there and I see that Mohegan has one coming up in June. So

that's the best that I can answer the question.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142rd):

Thank you. I guess, Mr. Speaker, what I was getting is this: Your know, Representative Hovey brought out a good point. She asked if there was any protective gear that are used in mixed martial arts matches. I think you indicated protective gear. But with the passage of this bill, it might be the decision of the commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection that if any match is held in Connecticut that they should wear more padded gloves or head gear or whatever. Obviously, that is not in this bill but it's my understanding that the passage of this bill would give the commissioner the right or the State, if you will, the right to regulate the sport by either -- by possibly requiring extra padding or other protective gear. Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would have to agree with that assumption. It would be left up to the commissioner to oversee what those regulations would be on a professional level minus the two Native American tribes that have their own form of government. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142rd):

Thank you.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding, as we all know, there is Taekwondo, there is karate schools throughout the state of Connecticut that young and old participate in, learn the art of whatever, whether it's Taekwondo, Kung Fu, and other martial arts. If, in fact, and I believe there is based on the comments that I heard, if there are these schools, these private schools that are out there currently teaching youth and/or others the art of mixed martial arts, upon the passage of this bill, would they be allowed to be regulated. For instance, if the commissioner decided that any activity concerning mixed martial arts conducted in this state with the exception of the two Indian casinos shall not

allow the activity to go on without protective head gear or padded gloves, et cetera, would those schools, private schools fall under that jurisdiction. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

I believe that it would. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was hoping that was the case and I'm glad we established that for legislative intent. And I guess to my colleagues who along with me share the concern about the nature of mixed martial arts, right now, if it's not a match, if it's a private school, anything goes. It is not regulated by the state. If, in fact, we are going to officially by this piece of legislation recognize mixed martial arts as a sport that can be regulated by this state that means we can regulate it in high schools, in private, you know, businesses that might teach the art of mixed martial

arts and we can impose protection on our citizenry by possibly requiring increased head gear, padded gloves, et cetera. So that would be the reason for I who has mixed emotions to vote for this bill. And I just want to confirm once again for legislative intent, that I'm correct in that assume, that if we pass this bill, not just professional or amateur matches, but the entire art of -- or the entire world, if you will, of mixed martial arts, could be regulated within the state of Connecticut, of course, with the exception of the casinos with regard to how it's carried out in high schools or in training facilities, both public and private by the state of Connecticut.

Once again, is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, it would include schools, amateur athletic associations connected to schools, and also give the commissioner jurisdiction over amateur and professional MMA matches in Connecticut. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

cah/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

199
May 7, 2013

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I think ladies and gentlemen if those of you like me are torn because of the nature of the sport, I think if you want to err on the side of caution, you would vote for this bill. And I think so because without this bill there is no regulation. There is no regulation. No ability to enforce or make sure that those who participate in the sport might have that protective gear if believe it's so warranted, might have those head gear, might have the padded gloves, might have other restrictions that we, as a state, see fit to impose on this sport. Without this bill, we have no say in that sport. So for that reason, I think it is better than the situation that we currently have.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I want a question that I think was posed by Representative Dargan. When he brought out the bill he wondered aloud rhetorically why it was he bringing out this bill and I believe I have the answer. It has been my privilege to serve with Representative Dargan for 20 years and during the

course of that I have witnessed him as my friend and fellow legislator engage in unarmed combat. I've watched him practice in his position as chairman of public safety grappling. I've watched him kick and strike and even if you notice carefully and you really know Representative Dargan, when you see him walk down a hall or into a room, his very gait resembles jiu-jitsu. And that I believe was the reason he was asked to bring out this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Well said, Representative Cafero.

Will you remark? Will you remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Ackert of the 8th District.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's a tough act to follow right there. Through you, a couple questions to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you.

To the good Representative Dargan, I noticed there was some deletions in this legislation that eliminated in multiple locations the wrestling exhibition portion of it and I was curious as to why that was removed. And one area that was catching is that we don't allow boxing and potential mixed martial on certain holidays, but we deleted wrestling exhibition and in some other areas also, if I could get an answer on that. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I know there's been an issue that Representative Bacchiochi and -- worked for a number of years with wrestling, protecting wrestling on our high school level and that was the reason for the deletion to protect amateur wrestling without our state. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

So the deletion in the bill is to protect wrestling exhibition. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that's correct.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I did notice that in -- in line 200 that the boxing has a maximum rounds and a set time value, 12 rounds max and three minutes with a rest period of no less than a minute. But in the mixed martial arts it can be five rounds with no stated time frame at all per round and I was curious is it just an open-ended time frame or is there different levels that they have for lengths of rounds. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, especially on the professional level, to the best of my ability, those rounds are usually five minutes with a maximum of three rounds. In boxing, it could go from anywhere from six, to eight to fifteen depending on what type

of -- what individual weight class it is. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for the answer. I know in boxing we've reduced it to 12 rounds and there was a set three minute round max now. It used to be 15 and they thought it was too long. So I was curious you could literally have ten-minute rounds if that was posed and I thought that that might be something that we look to other states maybe or through the commissioner and probably set some value there. But I'd like to thank the good Chairman for his answers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Hovey of the 112th for the second time, madam.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for second time.

I just want to remind this body that under martial arts or the eastern arts, which I am not a practitioner of, I'm not as disciplined as many of the people who participate in that, but there is a code for behavior. There is a Code of Ethics. And that Code of Ethics for participation in that sport some of it has to do with courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and spirit. The bout that I saw on television was beat or be beaten and in my mind, it looked very much like a gladiator sport in Roman times.

So I really would, once again, encourage this group, I understand the idea of regulation, but you don't have to regulate something that you're not going to tolerate. Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Madam.

Representative Moukawsher of the 40th District, you have the floor, sir.

REP. MOUKAWSHER (40th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sadden that we're at this point today where we're about to the endorse the kind of conduct that, you know, I've observed, you know, from watching the

few MMA matches I've watched. I think it used to be called ultimate fighting. And I was horrified when I watched this on television. I couldn't believe, first of all, that it was even televised because it was so brutal. You know, I don't think it teaches anybody anything that's healthy. I don't think it's the kind of message we, as adults, should be sending to children, that it's okay to engage in this kind of violent conduct as long as it's licensed. I mean, we're saying, well, it exists already, let's regulate it. And I think that's a cop-out honestly.

I mean, in my opinion, we have a choice. We can decide to endorse this conduct or we can decide that we don't find it fitting and appropriate. And I personally find it offensive. I find it appalling and it saddens me that we're doing this for the sake of revenue. I don't think there's any high moral ground in this situation. If -- you know, you can attempt to rationalize why we're doing this, but I just find it, you know, a sad commentary on the kind of thing that we're prepared to accept in exchange for -- for taxes and money. So I'm going to vote no and I'm really, again, appalled that we're going to approve this kind of conduct. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

Representative Betts of 78th District, you have the floor, sir.

REP. BETTS (78th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I was not planning on speaking on this bill, and like many people here, I'm very torn and conflicted on the views here. But I've really come down to the point where I look at our society today and I see how much violence is going on and I'm very concerned about the way people look at it, how it impacts them, particularly our younger people and what it says to us as a society. I would like to think that we could be able to do a lot of other things like Representative Miner had said that would be much more gratifying and that would be far less violent than this particular sport, if you call it a sport, takes place.

We obviously need to have it regulated and it's very tempting to support this because it will provide regulations, but to be honest with you, I find it very difficult to justify -- and I certainly wouldn't be

taking people to come and watch a match and say wasn't this fun. I'm not sure it falls in my definition of an actual sport. So for those reasons, I'm going to be opposing this bill and I would agree with the previous speaker about saying I hope this is much more than about revenue because there are going to be a lot of unintended consequences that we're going see as a fallout from this. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Do you care to remark further? Do you care to remark further on the bill that's before us?

If not, staff and guests to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber, please.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? Members, please check the board and make sure your

vote is properly cast. If all members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

And would the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill 5277.

Total number voting	143
Necessary for adoption	72
Those voting Yea	117
Those voting Nay	26
Those absent and not voting	7

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill is passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 155.

THE CLERK:

On page 6 of today's calendar, House Calendar 155, favorable report of the Joint Committee on Banks, House Bill 6340, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT UNIFORM SECURITIES ACT.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Tong.

REP. TONG (147th):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VETO
SESSION**

**VOL. 56
PART 17
5161 - 5482**

Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, if the Clerk would call as the next item -- if we might stand at ease for just -- or next -- the next item if we might stand at ease for just a moment --

THE CHAIR:

Stand at ease.

SENATOR LOONEY:

-- and before calling the next couple of items that have been previously marked.

(Chamber at ease.)

SENATOR LOONEY:

Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Mr. President, I believe we're ready to proceed, and if the Clerk would call as the next item, Calendar page 6, Calendar 554, House Bill Number 5277.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 6, Calendar 554, Substitute for House Bill Number 5277, AN ACT CONCERNING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS, favorable report of the Committee on Public Safety and Security.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Good afternoon, Mr. President.

I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report, sir, and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance of passage in concurrence.

Will you remark?

SENATOR COLEMAN:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, this bill would legalize amateur and professional mixed martial arts, which is commonly referred to as MMA. It would subject the MMA matches and programs to the very same laws that we now have with regard to professional boxing. This includes the regulation of the event by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, better known as DESPP, which would have oversight for licensing, taxing, the match rules, the conditions and welfare of the fighters, the requirements with regard to age, and also for the oversight of enforcing, for violations and penalties.

Mr. President, I would just like to add a footnote to this proposal. We talked earlier in the week about joining the other 48 on another matter. Well, it so happens that all other 48 states do have the regulation of MMA and we would then be the 49th.

The reason for this is it is, without a doubt, the fastest growing sport in the country and even nationally and internationally. And it is also very, very popular with many youth groups. It is a

combination of martial arts, boxing, jujitsu, karate, wrestling.

I would like to, at this point, Mr. President, yield to the vice chair of the Public Safety and Security Committee, my colleague, Senator Ayala, who I would like to thank first of all for his work on this but also generally for his work on the Public Safety Committee and welcome him to this Circle. He has been an incredible addition to all of us but also in particular on Public Safety. And if I may, I would like to yield to him, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Ayala, do you accept the yield?

SENATOR AYALA:

I do.

Mr. President, nice seeing you up here this afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

SENATOR AYALA:

I'd like to just first thank the fine chairwoman of our Public Safety for helping lead us out through the committee, also the chairman from the House side, Chairman Dargan, as well. I just like to add a little bit more information in regards to what this bill does and then open up for questions.

The bill requires MMA match promoters, referees, sponsors and participants to be licensed by DESPP. It prohibits the DESPP commissioner from issuing a license to conduct MMA matches where prohibited by local ordinances. This bill will also prohibit anyone from competing in MMA matches unless they're certified by a doctor as physically fit. Additionally, this will require organizations, gymnasiums, or clubs hosting matches to register with DESPP and pay a \$100

registration fee. It would also impose a 5 percent tax on gross admission receipts after federal taxes have been deducted.

In addition, it will also allow the commissioner to investigate match venue for safety; and finally, it will require the commissioner to adopt regulations governing MMA match safety, conduct and supervision, including establishing procedures and fees for match sponsors and participants.

In addition to that, Mr. President, one of the major reasons why I stand in support of this bill is because of the economic impact that it will have to the state and also the city I represent and other cities that have facilities, like the Webster Bank Arena. The fact of the matter is that on evenings when the Webster Arena is dark, our downtown area is dark as well. We don't have a downtown that's vibrant. The fact that having MMA here in the state of Connecticut and coming to the Webster Arena or the XL Arena, it brings people in.

Conservatively speaking, in having conversation with ownership over at the Webster Arena, we're looking at \$150,000 coming to state coffers in revenues for just one event that they host. XL Arena has different revenues. I've seen up to at least 200 or 250,000 on their part. So essentially, this is a good business bill.

Additionally, in conversations with folks, this is a sport that is growing. It's a sport that has a tremendous following to it. This would add vibrancy, this will fill the -- it will fill hotels in Bridgeport. It will fill restaurants and bars and create job opportunities for individuals that will be, number one, doing the setup for the event; number two, actually running the event; and then finally, in breaking down and bringing all of the setup back to where it has to -- once the event is finished. And it's a good economic generator. I talked to the businesses in our downtown. They are actively -- they can't wait for this to happen. It's a good thing for our cities. It will create some vibrancy. It will bring people into our cities to support our businesses.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise in support of the bill before us today. It's been here for, it seems like quite a number of years. And I want to thank those that actually brought up some participants in the sport a couple of years ago. We had a chance to meet some of them and -- and their determination to be able to -- to practice in their sport outside of a tribal land was immense. And they spent an entire day here at the State Capitol.

I look back to what the chairwoman of the Public Safety Committee said -- (inaudible) all the boxing regulations. You know, when we look back at boxing and how when it first started folks thought it was part of the underground movement or the mob-related things and it was very loosely controlled. So we, as a state, when we sanctioned boxing, we came up with very tense and intense regulations, from promoters to advertisement to venue. Even now for -- for the doctors, they have to be present prior to for an examination, during the bout, and then afterwards. And the entire spectrum of that is to make sure that the participants are safe and able to participate in this sport.

And the fact of the matter is that we already offer the sport in the state of Connecticut. So why not allow the communities that are struggling economically to benefit by us expanding a sport that's already here in our state. It's not something new.

As Senator Ayala so commandedly pointed out, this will help the venues in his neighborhood, in his district, to bring people to the city of Bridgeport, to spend their hard-earned money in the city of Bridgeport, to

provide jobs to the residents in the area of the city of Bridgeport. I urge the Chamber's adoption.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further?

Senator McKinney.

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

If I may, I do have a few questions for the proponent of the bill and, I mean, this is really borne out of my, I think, personal struggle with the bill that we have before us. And I'm not sure who I should direct the questions to but I'm happy to direct them to whomever.

Okay, through you, Mr. President, to Senator --

THE CHAIR:

-- Ayala.

SENATOR WELCH:

-- Ayala. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

All right. Senator Ayala, do you --

Senator Hartley -- Senator Ayala, answer the questions.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Ayala, I -- I understand that this currently takes place in Connecticut on the reservations. And if that understanding is correct, perhaps, maybe, through you, Mr. President, you can just share with me what -- what the experience has been there. You talk about the potential of more jobs and revenue for the City of Bridgeport and whatever other venues might take this up, but I would imagine there's already a track record and to the extent that you have that information I would appreciate hearing about it.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, yes, that is correct. It is actually a sport that is in Connecticut but in our casinos.

The important thing about this is the fact that it is successful, people do visit it. But by regulating -- the fact that we would be approving it here, approving this bill, this would allow for regulation. This would allow for having a commission to come in and regulate it the same way that boxing is done right now, and to ensure that when these folks come in, they are being responsible business, adhering to regulations set forth by the state of Connecticut.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And through you, how often do these matches take place currently at the reservations, if you know?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

I don't have that information. The information that I have is that they have come. I can't unfortunately give you an exact number of times they've been here, but in speaking with the promoters, they have been very successful when they've come, but I don't have the exact number of times they've been.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Now, as I understood from the testimony before, this is taking place already in a number of states and, perhaps, there's only one or two left, Connecticut being one of them, and I would imagine with those many matches in those many places there is a governing body in place that has, essentially, some oversight with respect to that, the matches, and would indeed have some oversight with respect to the matches that currently take place on the reservations; is that a correct understanding?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

That -- that is correct. Most states that have MMA, they do have commissions that regulate the sport, and that would be the case here if -- upon passage of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I would also imagine then that the national organizations or regulating bodies, as it were, would have some understanding as to injury rates, kind of injuries, how many concussions, participants get potentially, and -- and I'm curious if -- if we have any of that information.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

We do have two reports that have come out. John Hopkins has provided a study on it, and also the British Journal of Sports Medicine have provided studies on them.

And interestingly enough, in reading these reports, they really don't show any major difference from what we are -- have come to be familiar with when we talk about boxing.

On the other hand, to be quite honest, they show that there is actually less blunt trauma to the head because as compared to boxing, boxing tends to be a sport where you have a lot of blows delivered to the head and the body, but mostly to the head when we are talking about knockouts. In MMA, at least through the reports that I've seen, essentially a good portion of how -- how matches are decided end up actually being through TKOs, technical knockouts, which mean when a referee stands in between the -- the combatants and separates them because one is in a position where he might be deemed as defenseless, another -- another way through these matches being decided are through what they call a tap out, which creates the situation when they're in a position where they have to, I guess, "submit," for lack of a better choice of word, but it

limits the actual occurrence of repeated blows to the head.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I guess along a different line of -- of questioning, we've heard in the past and you hear about -- about various sports having challenges with performance enhancing drugs, whether it be, you know, boxing in the past or -- or even, you know, Major League Baseball, and I'm curious, and I honestly don't know the answer to this question, has there been any information with respect to that in MMA?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. President, to be quite honest, this sport actually encourages the testing of performance enhancing drugs. The UFC, who happens to sort of be the major leagues of MMA, each individual combatant -- each individual athlete that is on for a bout on whatever given evening, they are tested, unlike some of our major sports, football -- baseball does have a form of testing but not 100 percent testing. In this case, UFC does do that.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Now it -- it looks like what we've done here is a prudent thing in that we're essentially modifying our statutes that currently exist for boxing, and so I understand that. And we're allowing mixed martial arts, which I think is defined or at least roughly alluding to a number types of martial arts and -- and putting that definition in statute. And I -- I think from what I understand having known just a little bit about what you see on TV, we're essentially talking about forms of martial arts that don't include weapons at all. And I just want to make sure, at least for the purposes of legislative intent, that that is the case, that we're only talking about hand-to-hand or foot-to-hand or whatever it is combat in that.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

Through you, Mr. President, that would be correct.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And I guess one thing that stood out to me which actually doesn't seem to have anything to do with mixed martial arts with respect to the changes that were made in the statute, is there are a number references in our statutes where we talk about boxing or wrestling exhibition, and I notice that we're striking those from -- from our statutes, and I don't know if -- if you would know or not, but what -- what is the purpose behind those deletions?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

Well, essentially, when this -- when this was drafted, it was -- this -- all the language that was there was already there in regards to boxing. And essentially what it does is it just adds mixed martial arts. So under that component, it's just simply existing language. The only thing that -- that we do is sort of drop MMA into the existing statute.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

That much I appreciate that we -- we are just dropping MMA into the statute, but it also looks like we're deleting amateur wrestling exhibition from the statute, and maybe that's just technical, maybe that's just cleaning -- cleaning things up. I'm wondering if there is a purpose for that and, if so, what that might be?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

I'll -- to be honest, through you, Mr. President, I -- I would imagine it's just cleaning up language. It's not anything that came up in any of the deliberations or any of the debate that happened within committee. So my assumption is that it would be just language to clean up the statute somewhat.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Thanks, Senator Ayala for his answers and the time.

I -- I got to tell you I -- I struggle with this. I see the trend in society, I see the desire from our -- our youth and -- and are not so youth for this. I understand the economic -- the economic argument but I struggle.

So thank you, Mr. President for the chamber's time.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And I stand in strong opposition to this bill. And I'm going to be brief, though, I could talk for hours.

Perhaps, it's because of my 30 years working as a preschool teacher where in my job I take young children who sometimes have an inclination to hurt each other and teach them to use their words and to respect each other, not hurt each other. It's very difficult for me to think that Connecticut is a kind of state that wants to open up to this brutal sport. And I've seen it on the videos, and I can't watch for long because it goes against such a core principle of mine as a teacher, mine as a parent, and even as a community member.

There's no doubt that watching violence has a strong impact on children. The data is in again, and again, and again. If they think it's okay, if they think

it's a sport, that's what happens. I send -- I was a preschool director during Power Rangers when kids would come in and pop each other, and our job was to teach them that that was not okay.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not -- I'm not a very religious person, in general, but I was -- the religion of my birth, looked up to something that we called the Prince of Peace, and we were taught about respect and peace. The religion I've chosen as an adult, as a Unitarian, the whole core of our religious principles are about justice, peace and love. I'm not saying that to be righteous, I'm saying that to say that on Sundays when I go to church, those are the things that I'm asked to consider, which, as again, a core principle it's very difficult for me to think that as a state, a state that prides itself on its high education and certainly on entertainment, but this is not the kind of entertainment that I think belongs, regulated or not.

We pass bills in our education statutes about concussions, we have to be really careful about concussions. Before students can even do a sport, they have to get tested to see what their brain function is so that if they get hit in the head, then we know they have a concussion. And after three, they played no sports again because of the long-term impact that can have on their functioning.

This is a brutal sport and I think it also speaks to a culture of violence. In December, this State was having a discussion about what are we going to do about our culture of violence. How can we help -- not have video games that are so violent or how can we limit them? What can we do to limit our culture of violence? This is escalating it, and I'm -- I'm just -- I'm going to be happy to cast a "no" vote, and I'm just -- wish we were never taking it up.

With all respect to Senator Ayala, because Senator Ayala is here proposing this bill for his community because he believes it's what his community needs for jobs and that's what we're here to do is to do what we believe is right for our community.

I'm here to say, as a state, Connecticut is better than this. In Connecticut, we can have arts and ideas festivals. Let's have more festivals of arts and idea and music and art and not say we're so -- things are so bad in the city that we have to let -- put men or women in a cage and have them punch each other in the face and kick each other. That's not economic development to me. That is really concerning.

So I'm -- I'm not going to go on and on because I want to give this Circle the right to vote on this bill, and I understand my perspective is just one, and -- and votes that people take are -- are their conscience, but I'm going to cast a "no" vote, and I wish I could cast 30.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further?

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I am going to support this bill, but I am mixed, and let me tell you why. I believe the -- the sport -- and I don't even like to call it that -- is a gruesome barbaric sport that should be back in the Roman times with the Roman Coliseum. I think it is a disgusting sport, and I don't consider it, as they say, a sport. That being said, I also believe that you have a right to turn off your TV and you have a right not to go to events. And therefore, I don't think it's up to -- at least from my point of view on this vote -- to determine in what is going to be censored and what is not going to be censored.

It's our obligation since it does exist to put certain rules and regulations to protect those who are not being protected. Weighing that against an outlaw of it, which is not up for today, there is no amendment

for today, seems to me we at least want to protect those involved in this activity. But I believe it is the most barbaric event one could ever dream of, and it's amazing to me that people tune into it or go to it.

That being said, I'll support the amendment because of the principle I could turn off the TV and not go, but I don't want that vote to ever mean that I support the underlying event.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator LeBeau.

SENATOR LEBEAU:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Similar feelings to the Minority Leader. You know, essentially, it's been said that we don't want to open up Connecticut to this barbaric sport, well, whether it's barbaric or not, Connecticut is open to it. Now we have casinos that are having exhibitions. I turned on my television the other night and there were at least two channels that I could watch to see this sport, so it's -- it's out there, and the question is -- and I have to say I have, working with young people over many years, in the last 10, 15 years, this -- this has become a very popular sport. Young people love it. And so I go back to an old -- an old saying back in the sixties and seventies, different strokes for different folks. And there are some folks who -- who like -- who like this and who are drawn -- drawn to it who are attracted to it. And as Senator Fasano said, if you don't like it, you can turn it off, you don't have to go. But there are people who do like it, and Senator Ayala has talked about Bridgeport, well, I'm not here to represent Hartford, but I do represent the Greater Hartford area, and I'd like -- I'd like to see this in -- at the XL Center. I mean, this is another kind of attraction, and there's

another entertainment event that we could have, and I hope -- hope that we do.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the bill?

Oh, Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Very good to see you, Mr. President, good afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon.

SENATOR KISSEL:

I listened intently to Senator Bye's passionate remarks, and I feel that she cares immensely about this bill. And in fact, I know she's been concerned about it for quite a while. She had spoken about changing the -- the crime and of violence in our state, but I stand in support of the bill. Although, I think there's some -- there may be some language in an implementer that we haven't voted on yet that might actually undermined the ability of this to go forward even if this bill passes.

I'm not an expert on how the interrelationships work, but if we go -- if we pass in another bill -- let's say this passes and we have in another bill that if someone is injured, there's this kind of complex formula that has to be followed that may ultimately mean as a business reality this won't happen in Connecticut. And that would be unfortunate because we don't want to be here on the last day of session raising people's expectations only to be quietly undercutting it in some other bill that's going to be voted on later on today. So I'll leave -- I'll leave that fight for others, but I would say examine what's in there because I have concerns.

I have a group of been my neck of the woods, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society, I've been a member -- you have to either be Italian, which I'm not or be married to an Italian, which I am, although if you're Sicilian descent they say we're not really Italian, we're Sicilian -- but I've been a member of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society for a couple of decades now, and one of the things that they did over the last few years is they've tried to bring in boxing to North Central Connecticut and when I heard about it I was a little skeptical. Apparently in the good old days in the Thompsonville area of Enfield, there used to be boxing matches, but we're saying, you know, twenties, thirties, forties, and it went out of vogue, probably beginning of the sixties. And so they said what a novel idea to try to bring it back outdoor, not even indoor, outdoor underneath the stars at the Mount Carmel Society and see if -- if there is interest.

And while I didn't go the last couple of times, my father-in-law, Ben Pallotta, soon to be retired president of the board of directors of the Mount Carmel Society, said it was a big hit, a lot of interest from all over Western Massachusetts and North Central Connecticut, a lot of excitement, a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of young people.

I asked was it an unruly crowd, the drinking stuff like that, he goes, absolutely not, really nice, really well run, people very interested. These are -- these are young athletes, they want to prove themselves. And it's sort of an interesting throwback to a different era when they can box underneath the stars. You hope the weather is going to be good that evening but it was a big deal. And in fact, just driving to and from the Capitol this week I saw signs along Route 5, Enfield Street at Enfield, you know, boxing match coming, and they have the date when it's coming. So -- so it's there, and it works, and it's highly regulated because we don't want anyone to get injured.

When Senator LeBeau says it's a reality, it's a reality. We can say what we want.

I actually don't believe the fundamental premise that if you observe violent things, you become a violent person. Sorry, big fan of Spyro the Dragon, can't tell you how many creatures in that video game over the years I have either blew up or ran into or blown up with fire, and there are video games that are very close to reality, but again I'm not sold on the notion that if you're glued to a video game you're necessarily going to become violent. I think it's a lot more complex than that, and it may come down to something as simple as hugs and kisses and a mom or dad that says I love you each and every day.

I don't have the magic wand on that particular issue, why some people are violent why some people are not. I don't think that you can lay it at the feet of technology necessarily. I think it's worth examining, but I think to make that simple equation that if I'm watching a mixed martial arts competition then all of a sudden I'm going to want to do something crazy. I mean, maybe if you're a little kid, you might think that you're Superman and jump off a roof and break your leg, and you know kids are rough and tumble whether their little boys or little girls, they may want to go and -- they get enthusiastic about these events and want to go out and do it. You see someone hit a home run, and you want to hit a home run, you see someone doing a karate chop, you want to do a karate chop, but is this necessarily bad for society? I'm not convinced.

I do have some concerns in over all sports where there's not necessarily the element of pugilism, but when there's that rough-and-tumble physicality, but if we're going to embrace sports, there's a physicality in almost every sport. You know, I remember when we were -- there was a period where, you know, heading in soccer was a big deal, what does it do to the brain, and we wanted to make sure that, you know, little kids don't do it, you know, heading in soccer. Well, if you follow that all the way to its conclusion, then we're not going to have soccer the way soccer is played throughout the world. We're not going to have hockey, we're not going to have football, you got a be honest, you're not going to have hardball baseball. I mean, I can just go through the line. I mean, you could get injured doing a pole vault. Believe me,

when I was crazy enough to monkey around on a track, you can get injured trying to do a hurdle because those things are hard, if you haven't stretched and you can't do that, even on the lower hurdle, that's not easy. Don't be trying that.

So fundamentally, when I look at the overall situation, I understand, to my core, the feelings expressed by Senator Bye. I don't want an overall violent society, but if we take some of these endeavors and they are closely regulated and monitored and we try to sort of create common sense rules for these sports and continue to continue with the pursuit of athletic competition in a way that flourishes and moves forward, at the same time, I think a great argument can be made that they are healthy events for physicality. You don't want people just out there with no rules, just like slamming into each other, wrestling and tumbling and getting into fights. These are not scripted but well organized, well managed, well regulated, with health officials and everything else like that at the ready.

So as Senator LeBeau just stated, different strokes for different folks, that's like I feel like I'm going back to the seventies when I hear something like that, but it is an ever-changing world, sometimes I marvel at it. Whenever I think I haven't seen -- whenever I think I've seen it all, the next day surprises me. That's why this world is so incredible. There's going to be something new, something crazy, and my first reaction might be, oh, my God, and then as I sort of think about it and I look at it, I might come to the conclusion, not so bad, it's not so bad. I mean in the back of my mind one of the things I hope I don't grow into and I hate to see the years spinning by because I don't feel like I'm 53, but I hope I don't turn into some sort of old stick-in-the-mud curmudgeon where every little change that comes down the road causes me to rise up in fear and concern and, oh, that's so different from the good old days and talking like that. I think there's an element as an American that we need to embrace change and challenge in new horizons, try to make it as good as possible, but we are in an ever-changing world.

So are there dangers in the things we do? There are dangers in the things we do. We don't drive our cars wearing motorcycle helmets. We don't get worried about banning scuba diving, but if you're down there several hundred feet and you lose your oxygen tank, that's big trouble. We all take pride if we have little boys or girls playing baseball or softball, but if somebody hits that ball real fast, real hard directly at you, you can get beamed and it can hurt and it can cause injury, and we can go through this -- we could pick out almost every Olympic sport and say there's an inherent danger in that sport, should we ban it. And I think at the end of the day, we would say no.

So as new things come on the horizon, new things come to the fore, I think it's good to -- to examine it, to try to make it as safe as possible, but if there are folks willing to compete, willing to train, willing to put themselves in the ring or the circle or however mixed martial arts is done, and it's done all over the country, then we owe it to ourselves to do it the best we can. And if it helps the City of Bridgeport, all the better. If it helps young people because they feel that this is their way out to make a name for themselves, all the better. If it's a way to raise some revenues in a healthy nontaxing way, all the better. And if it's something that puts us on an even playing field with other competitors throughout the United States, even better.

So for those reasons, Mr. President, I stand in support of the bill.

Again, I do caution what's in the implementer, as I was told there may be some things that completely cut the legs out from this being a viable possibility. I hope that's not the case because I hate to have us do one thing over here and then five hours, basically, cut the legs out from it over here. What -- what does that tell our constituents? Not a good message. But we're having a healthy debate on the bill that we have us before us right now, and I'm happy to stand in support of it.

Thank you Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise in support of the bill, and just briefly I would start my remarks where many in this circle, Senator Bye and some others left off, and that was we don't want this type of violent sport in Connecticut. And I respect that opinion. My difference is that we already have that violent sport in the state of Connecticut. So now it's a question of why do we have it, who has it and should we let others? We know that MMA matches exist at the two tribal casinos. They are sovereign nations. We can't regulate them. We can't stop them. So the question is why can't Connecticut facilities avail themselves of the same opportunity?

I've been to -- and would love to continue to go to the Arena at Harbor Yard many times, whether it's Sound Tiger games, my own kids have hockey games there, my son has hockey games there. There are a lot of events there. But the reality is that -- that arena needs more events. The reality is that whether it's a concert or a boxing match or a sporting event, we know that the Mohegan Sun, for example, can guarantee that act more money than they can at the Arena at Harbor Yard, because they don't need to make the profit at the Mohegan Sun because they know if they get 5, 6, 7,000 seats in the arena, some of them are going to gamble and they know they win. So they don't need to make the profits that you have to to run the Arena at Harbor Yard or the XL Center, and that's why the arena suffers.

Let's not forget that the taxpayers of the state of Connecticut put millions of dollars into the Arena of Harbor Yard to try to help Bridgeport. And as someone who's spent 49 years in Connecticut and 49 of those 49

years in Fairfield and Westport, I've seen Bridgeport struggle. And I know that allowing MMA will allow the Arena at Harbor Yard to go after several more events a year. That will keep the arena opened, that will keep the dozens, if not hundreds, of people who are employed at that arena employed in the city. Every time there's 4, 5, 6,000 people at the arena, the restaurants in Bridgeport are filled. When the arena is dark, they're not. This has multiplying effects for our economy.

If it were a debate about allowing MMA to be available in Connecticut, I might be different on that, but we have it in Connecticut. The question is should it be the sovereign right of the tribal casinos, or should it be the right for all businesses in the state of Connecticut.

And on that account, I want to stand with Senator Ayala, with the Arena at Harbor Yard, the people in Bridgeport and the other facilities, like the XL Center, because they deserved to have the chance to compete, even though it's still not a level playing field, they deserved the chance to compete for these acts.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Yes, Mr. President.

If I might, for the purposes of legislative intent, sir, to Senator Ayala.

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Senator Ayala, it was my understanding that all of the cost for the oversight on the regulation of MMA would be borne by those sponsors who, in fact, were sponsoring and putting together these events; is that correct, sir?

Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

That is -- is absolutely correct. It all passes through to the promoter.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

-- Senator Ayala, and through you, Mr. President, just by way of summation, I would just like to, having heard the colloquy amongst the Circle, that there is no doubt that MMA is a contact sport, as is boxing and wrestling and jujitsu and karate and, yes, football. I can remember being on the -- right at -- by the bench in a -- a professional football game and it was appalling to hear the noise of the bodies clashing which you are shielded from when you're watching certainly on television.

And so, yes, MMA, combination of the martial arts is without a doubt contact sport but, yes, it is highly regulated, and the existence of it has proven that the regulation makes for the safety and the good

refereeing does not allow any serious physical harm. And -- and so I would say that we would be in a far better place than to have it underground, as it may indeed be existing, at least in this state. And also to point out that these are athletes. The athleticism of those who participate cannot be questioned. They are weight trainers, they are cardiac -- supremely fit in terms of their cardiac ability, and they are very skilled in certain techniques, tapping out, and all of the other things that go with the martial arts, arm bars and so forth which is way above what I know. But so I would like to say that I think by virtue of our regulating it, we bring it into a universe where it can be beneficial to those athletes, as well as the economic benefits, which I think are ancillary in this point. But I would like to also, once again, recognize the incredible work of Senator Ayala, and urge passage by my colleagues.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark further?

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I'd like to just add -- and unless anybody has any other further comments, and just to summarize as well. I want to thank everybody who was open to have this conversation. I know that as a member of the House for several years, we worked in the House to get this bill passed, and in coming here and working with the caucus and working with folks from the other aisle, we were able to have further conversations, and I understand, people who might be opposed to extending this, and I understand their positions, but what I -- what I would say to those individuals who are having trouble with this and the fact that it seems as violent as they think it is, oftentimes what we're doing is we're looking at one clip of a YouTube video

or what have you, and you need to realize that all the matches don't end up in that particular way. I mean, it's no excuse, or I'm not trying to turn anybody because of it, but this is a sport that is -- you have individuals that train hard and they compete hard as well. And the fact of the matter is that, as many people have mentioned, it's already here in Connecticut, and I urge adoption. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

If not, Mr. Clerk, please announce the pendency of a roll call vote. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted?
Please check the board to make sure your vote is accurately recorded. If all members have voted, the machine will be closed and the Clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5277

Total Number Voting	35
Those voting Yea	26
Those voting Nay	9
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PUBLIC
SAFETY AND
SECURITY
PART 1
1 – 377**

**2013
INDEX**

Let's get on to a regular six-year code adoption cycle and then as soon as practical when those six-year intervals occur, adopt whatever the latest models are from the various organizations.

I would say in closing, I heard the bell, that in our proposals on line 17, we talk about the six year or longer cycle. I think you could strike the or longer, two words, and stay consistent with that.

And then finally, the important point about doing this is that if we can get on a regular code adoption cycle we will save the state money, right? Because it's a very expensive federal process as I indicated. You'll save municipalities money because municipalities have to train their building officials and buy the code books, which are expensive. That foot-thick book is very expensive. And you'll create more consistency and save money for the entire design and construction industry.

So I would urge your support. I would urge you to vote to draft the bill, offer our draft as consideration and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you, Bill. Questions? Hearing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

BILL ETHIER: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Next up is Lori Pelletier.

LORI PELLETIER: Good afternoon, Committee. My name is Lori Pelletier and I serve as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO representing 900 local unions who have members in each and every town in our state.

HB 5277

I'm here to testify in opposition of House Bill 5277 AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS.

You have my written testimony. Let me just summarize it and say that on a couple levels we oppose this. One, we oppose it on the fact that the primary beneficiaries of this Ultimate Fight Championship their owners are owners in the Station Casino in Las Vegas where they had last year when we testified, 87 unfair labor practices filed against them and unfortunately here to report it is now 88 unfair labor practices, including the National Labor Relations Board in October filing that their appeal was for naught.

So the issue of how they treat their workers in Las Vegas, how they fail to negotiate with them, how they're not fair at the bargaining table does not leave us hopeful that they will be fair to the workers here in the State of Connecticut.

The second piece of that is the issue of violence, violence and hate. Many of these performers if you will, or athletes, are not shy from slurs, racial slurs, slurs against the LGBT communities, slurs against women and we just find that to be repulsive to our state for bringing in that kind of violence and that kind of hate. There's enough violence and hate to go around.

So we appreciate the opportunity to testify in front of this Committee and we would appreciate it if the Committee would not bring this bill out and if you have any questions I'd be happy to answer them at this time.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you, Lori. Questions?
Representative Yaccarino.

COMMITTEE

REP. YACCARINO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You speak of violence. Do you have recorded evidence of violence in Connecticut or in any other state besides Nevada? Violence by the wrestlers and the organization as a whole?

LORI PELLETIER: Well, in the ring, when they're in the ring there is violence.

REP. YACCARINO: But there's violence in football, there's violence in basketball. Do you have any actual evidence that these men and women commit violence outside the ring?

LORI PELLETIER: I didn't say that they commit violence outside the ring.

REP. YACCARINO: But you said they commit violence? Well, it's a violent sport. It actually is. But it's also regulated by most states, except for Connecticut is not one that's not regulated.

And how about the men and women that need jobs in Bridgeport and Hartford, Connecticut, that are union jobs, that want these jobs? Those two cities are dying and they need as much support as possible. These are good, high paying jobs.

I could see if you had real evidence but I don't see the evidence. I don't.

LORI PELLETIER: Well, again, the evidence is in the ring. It's a violent sport. I mean, the Marine Corps just disaffiliated with the Ultimate Fight Championship because of the violence, the vulgarity, the slurs, the hate.

And so, you know, if the Marine Corps, which is looking for tough, you know macho sort of folks, then if it's too much for them, that says something.

COMMITTEE

REP. YACCARINO: What is it, they're raising just because it was verbally violent?

LORI PELLETIER: Because of the hate that some of the athletes spew and the violence of the act in the ring.

REP. YACCARINO: If it was that case, I think most other states would be in it, would already be in this sport. It's the fastest growing, I don't even watch it. I'm a boxing fan. But the fact is, these are high paying jobs in Connecticut, that we have to look at all avenues and all views.

You're saying you have a problem with the AFL-CIO in Nevada. If they didn't have that problem I don't know if you'd be testifying against them.

LORI PELLETIER: If they didn't have that --

REP. YACCARINO: You said there was a case brought up against the MMA, this organization, in Nevada.

LORI PELLETIER: Eighty-eight unfair labor practices.

REP. YACCARINO: All right. But my point is, are there any other unfair labor practices in any other states besides Nevada?

LORI PELLETIER: Well, the Ultimate Fight Championship is the owner of the Station Casino where the battle is.

REP. YACCARINO: Right.

LORI PELLETIER: It's not, the unfair labor practice isn't in the MMA sport itself. It's the fact that these owners, these billionaire owners are not willing to negotiate fairly with the workers.

REP. YACCARINO: But that's my point. Are there any other states that would have this problem?

LORI PELLETIER: They don't own any other casinos that I know of.

REP. YACCARINO: So just in Nevada. Nothing in Atlantic City? Nothing in any other states with casinos?

LORI PELLETIER: No.

REP. YACCARINO: But in here they'll be guided by the rules of the AFL-CIO, any union, to pay them high wages, fair wages. So I don't see what that has to do with here. That's my question.

LORI PELLETIER: Well, it has a lot to do, right? Because the whole issue of an unfair labor practice is they're failing to negotiate. They're failing to sit down and talk.

In a state like Nevada, where every casino in the City of Las Vegas has a collective bargaining agreement, and they're failing to do that.

So there's rules already against that they violated it 88 times.

REP. YACCARINO: I personally would like to see them come here. I don't live in Hartford. I don't live in Bridgeport, but our Connecticut economy needs it. It is a regulated sport.

Right now there's MMA without regulation. I'd rather have it regulated than the all-time boxing from 50, 60, 70 years ago. I think we should look at this and actually bring it to a vote. That's my personal opinion.

I think the people in Bridgeport need it. I think the people in Hartford need it, and I think the state needs it.

It's not just those jobs. It's the television jobs. It's the jobs at the sandwich shops, the local businesses. We really have to. Unfortunately that is, it's unfortunate what happened possibly in Nevada but we have to look past that and try to do something better in our state.

So I'd like to --

LORI PELLETIER: I can't disagree with you on the jobs. Absolutely. I just don't think that this is the road we need to go down. I don't think we need to go into this violence.

I mean, we're certainly not, there's no bill that's been raised about dog fighting or other animal fighting that other states you know, it is allowed in.

We're not looking at that. We need jobs. I agree with you, Representative, absolutely.

REP. YACCARINO: I just think when it's regulated and done properly, it's a viable sport. Again, I'm more of a boxing fan and that's violent. But I think we should look at it as a whole and try to rectify the problem that's in Nevada. Maybe we can rectify that in Connecticut and we could be the leader of that. That's just my take on it and I'm, obviously we're all here fighting for jobs and doing the right thing and we'll keep looking at it. Thank you.

LORI PELLETIER: Thank you, Representative.

REP. DARGAN: Further questions? Senator.

SENATOR AYALA: Thank you for your testimony. In your opinion, is boxing violent?

COMMITTEE

LORI PELLETIER: I'm a hockey fan, so I think anything short of that.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay. Should we ban hockey from being shown in Connecticut or being played in Connecticut?

LORI PELLETIER: I think that you're misunderstanding what I'm saying here is that yes --

SENATOR AYALA: No. You made a statement about, you compared, you said it's a violent sport.

LORI PELLETIER: It is a violent sport.

SENATOR AYALA: Based on what study?

LORI PELLETIER: Based on watching it. My own personal study.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay. So it's an opinion.

LORI PELLETIER: Yes.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay. I can accept that. I think it's violent myself, but I choose not to watch it, but I don't think that it shouldn't be shown here. There are people who choose to watch it.

I don't necessarily like hockey. I can appreciate the athleticism of hockey. I don't think that the fighting part of it, but if you ask many of the fans, they watch it for the fights, so it's a matter of opinion.

I've looked at and researched and tried to see the difference between boxing and UFC, MMA, and I don't necessarily see much of a difference in regards to the violent nature of it. On the contrary, I've seen some reports that actually show that it's less violent than boxing and some of the long-term type of effects with head

trauma, what have you because of the fact that MMA tends to have submission holds and the fighters tend to tap out and end the fight.

So I think that when we talk about violence, it may actually, if you look at or do a study on it, it may end up seeming to be that there's a lot more head trauma in boxing than in MMA.

Now, you also made mention of, I'm not sure if it was 87 or 88 instances where the union, there was a conflict between the union and the casino folks in Vegas.

Were any of those conflicts between the folks with the UFC or was it directly with the casino side?

LORI PELLETIER: The Station Casino, of which they're owners.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay. Further question. Where these events are held in 48 states in the United States, do they employ union workers in each one of those states to do the necessary work that goes on to put on the event?

LORI PELLETIER: I'm sure they do.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay.

LORI PELLETIER: If there are unions there, I'm sure they do.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay. So essentially the claim now is because something happened in Vegas then we should not be doing business in Connecticut? That's essentially the claim?

LORI PELLETIER: I don't think that you can say something happened.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay.

LORI PELLETIER: Eighty-eight unfair labor practices is huge.

SENATOR AYALA: In the casino?

LORI PELLETIER: With the people that own the casino, right.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay.

LORI PELLETIER: And so to reward those people that are the owners of the casino, that are mistreating those workers and failing to bargain with them, which is a violation of federal law, to then reward them and have them make money here in Connecticut just seems counter-intuitive to me.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay. I can respect your opinion. I would venture to say, I'd like to reward the people in Bridgeport. I'd like to reward the workers in Connecticut. We are in a downshift in our economy where folks are struggling to get by, where the people in the district that I represent, when the lights are out at the local arena, they don't work.

When the lights are out in the local arena, it makes it a little bit difficult for them to be able to come up with the necessary funds to pay rent, buy groceries and at least from some of the reports that I've seen, it actually provides revenues to the state.

So I understand the issue that you bring up, but at least on my side of it, I need to try to balance the good, the bad and everything that's in the middle and I know that in talking to local business owners in the City of Bridgeport, they wholeheartedly endorse it because whenever there's an event at our downtown arena, our downtown is hopping.

COMMITTEE

We have folks that spin off from the events that happen at the arena. We have bars. We have restaurants, shops, that if not for those events, they would probably have to shut down early and not be able to give more hours of work to the people in my district and not provide those services.

So I mean, I can appreciate your argument, but when I look at the overall benefit of what this would do and what this would bring, especially to the district that I represent, it's a tough argument to bring back home to my constituents and say that you know, we had the opportunity to create more events, to create more opportunities for people to take home a bigger paycheck and we're choosing not to.

Thank you for your testimony.

LORI PELLETIER: Thank you, Senator.

REP. DARGAN: Further comments? Representative Hampton.

REP. HAMPTON: Lori, thank you for being here. Can you speak more specifically to the, you mentioned, what is it, racial comments or anti-gay comments? How do those take place? Are those in the ring? I have not yet seen one of these events, and I do plan on checking it out myself, but are they in the ring to each other, is it to audience members and the public? How does that transpire?

LORI PELLETIER: I think that it's a combination. You know, this hasn't been, you know, some of the comments on websites talking about rape and making light of rape.

And again, I get, we get so much about the idea, the issue of jobs. We totally appreciate

that. We understand that the inner cities are hurting.

Our concern is that we don't think that the promises that are being made, that this is going to, it may add a couple of dates and I know that that's important if you're a downtown business person to have a couple of dates at an arena, but in turn we're bringing more violence.

I mean, there are so many bills that have been raised by this General Assembly about violence from video games to movies to everything else. We've seen gun shows cancelled because of what has happened to us over the course of the last almost eight weeks now.

And so, our concern is that these aren't good players where they're established and they have an audience. They allow slurs. They allow rape to be minimized, and we have an opportunity here to stand up and say, listen, we want things better.

Fix those. Fix your system. Fix your product and you're welcome to bring it here, and again, you know. I can't imagine that we've seen over the course of the last few weeks when football players have said things, have used, unfortunately used the word retarded or things like that, and there's a big apology.

There's no such apology from mixed martial arts.

REP. DARGAN: Representative Mikutel.

REP. MIKUTEL: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, you're swimming upstream, you know. This bill will pass.

LORI PELLETIER: It won't be the first time and it won't be the last.

pat/gbr PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY
COMMITTEE

11:00 A.M.

REP. MIKUTEL: I know. This bill will pass this Committee. This bill will pass the House of Representatives and possibly be signed into law. There's only a few individuals that are going to stop this.

But I've always had concerns about this bill and you've already alluded to those concerns. But you talk about we already have enough violence in our society and it's troubling that this is a blood sport. You know, that's pure and simple. It's a blood sport. It's a very violent sport. It stands on itself almost by the amount of violence that is part of this sport.

And I'm not, I know you're here representing labor, but I'm concerned also about the message that we're sending out, particularly to young people, and I wonder where it would go after it becomes legal. Then we're going to have martial, mixed martial art youth centers popping up, because, I mean, that would be the next step.

You're going to have youth centers. You're going to have these little kids, five, six, seven, eight-year-old kids going to these mixed martial arts youth centers and what is that going to do?

I mean, I could see these little kids now in all these little mixed martial arts youth centers kicking each other in the head. How about putting that, what do they call it, submission hold? Seven, eight-year-old kid doing a submission hold on another kid?

I mean, I think we're a little bit better than that as a state and as a people. I mean, I hate to bring up this issue of violence. We all know what took place in Connecticut. But it seems like that's over here and now we're

talking about promoting a blood sport and bringing it into Connecticut.

Yeah, okay, the casinos have it, but it's going to get worse if you bring it in. It's going to be in most major cities. You're going to have, also you're going to have springing up these mixed martial arts youth centers with these little kids out there bashing each other's head in and that's not what I want Connecticut to be.

So I'm not going to ask you other questions that I had about the particular sport, but you know, there's other ways of making money. We could put slot machines in nursing homes, you know. We could put slot machines in grocery stores, in the malls.

I mean, if it's about making money, there's ways about making money. There's all kinds of different avenues you can make money and create jobs. Governor Malloy's got a proposal about creating jobs.

Now, I certainly understand my colleagues who live in the big urban areas and if I were them, it would be a real predicament and I understand that and I sympathize with them.

But I guess if mixed, I don't see and equate MMA with judo or jiu jitsu or karate. That's not an entertainment sport, per se, with a streak of violence running through it. There the emphasis is on discipline and controlling one's actions and it's really a spiritual thing. All the real karate people will tell you that, that self-restraint is very important.

There's no self-restraint with mixed martial arts. That's not the point. I'm going to oppose the bill. There's not going to be many

COMMITTEE

here opposing it, but I just think we can be a less violent society if we promoted, didn't do as much to promote acts of violence.

REP. DARGAN: Further questions? Well, I know you said that you thought that this was violent. I say sometimes politics in this building could be violent.

LORI PELLETIER: It might even be a blood sport (inaudible).

REP. DARGAN: I also know what Representative Mikutel said that, you know, mixed martial arts is really a combination, is really somewhat unique in the number of different components that it brings to.

And as I was listening to your testimony and listening to it, I'm watching Glover Teixeira that will testify later who is a fighter in MMA and you know, the unique thing about it is, I mean, it's really outgrown wrestling right now and we do have it already within our state at Mohegan, anyways, at our Native American Tribes.

And I just hope that it is your leadership with the AFL-CIO and with the understanding of Bridgeport and Hartford and someone I know for a number of years, Charlie Dowd, who, you know, was involved at Yale New Haven Ravens that maybe you can sit down and maybe put whatever those differences aside to look at for your membership, for labor to increase that and knowing what happened in Vegas and knowing what happened in New York, too, that maybe we could have a further discussion to resolve whatever issues that are important to your membership.

So I appreciate the opportunity of you being here to testify before us today.

COMMITTEE

LORI PELLETIER: Thank you, Representative.

REP. DARGAN: Are there any other further questions?
Thank you.

LORI PELLETIER: Thank you, sir.

REP. DARGAN: The next speaker, is it Adam Mulhearn
from Norwalk.

ADAM MULHEARN: Good afternoon, Republican, I'm
sorry, Representative Dargan, and all the
distinguished Members of the Public Safety and
Security Committee.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you
today on Bill HB 6009 concerning an interactive
electronic computer training platform that can
be used by local police officers in their
municipalities to complete training
requirements mandated by the Police Officers
Standard and Training Council known as POST.

I come to you today representing my company, R3
Omni, which is located and operated out of
Norwalk, Connecticut.

A better trained police officer makes for a
more effective police officer. R3Omni's
interactive police training and alert system
we're nicknaming TAK can provide an on-demand
training delivery system at each of the police
departments in Connecticut.

The TAK solution offers an interactive touch
screen kiosk, which may be located at any
approved facility and contains up-to-date
training material and courseware as well as
alerts on a 24/7 basis. Content is comprised
of text, diagrams, photographs, power points,
PDF and all types of video.

R3Omni's TAK solution can save municipal
resources by allowing municipal police officers

REP. DARGAN: I always love when a State Trooper and a local cop go at each other. Sort of makes it interesting.

ANDREW MATTHEWS: No, we're not going at it. We're equals. We just have different jobs with different uniforms.

REP. DARGAN: We could get a cage here, you know.

ANDREW MATTHEWS: I'm a Red Sox fan, so I don't kick box, box and other. The Representative mentioned that I'm here speaking on behalf of the members of the State Police Union, of course, but I think part of what I do also is, I try to remain objective as a risk manager and an attorney and I try to look at things.

When you think that you're being efficient you really should consider whether it's being efficient. Your short-term savings might cost you a lot more in the long run. So that's all. We're trying, we have a tremendous amount of respect for the Public Safety Committee. It's dear to us, and the public and we just want to offer our perspective to you hoping that it might give some insight to our side of it.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you very much and thank you for your service to the state, too. Any other questions? Hearing none, thank you, Andy.

ANDREW MATTHEWS: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Our next presenter is Melissa Mason.

MELISSA MASON: Good afternoon, Senator Hartley and Representative Dargan and Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Melissa Mason and I'm a Legislative Liaison for UNITE HERE located at 425 College Street in New Haven. I myself reside at 180 Fountain Street in New Haven.

HB 5277

COMMITTEE

I'm here to testify on behalf of Bob Proto, International Vice-President of UNITE HERE in opposition to House Bill Number 5277 AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS.

In the wake of the tragic mass shooting in Newtown, it is unthinkable that lawmakers in any jurisdiction would risk exposing our children to an activity that involves extreme violence and brutality.

Cage fighting also known as ultimate fighting and mixed martial arts is sensationalized violence that has no place in civilized society. In these contests, fighters are allowed to knock each other unconscious through elbows, kicks and knees to the head and to strangle each other to the point of passing out through choke holds.

At least four cage fighters from the United States are reported to have died from injuries sustained during amateur or professional cage fights.

Professional cage fighting organizations such as the UFC have thus far failed to adequately police the behaviors of fighters. Prominent UFC fighters have joked about rape in public and have made remarks that are demeaning toward woman, gays and Latinos.

UFC fighter Quinton Rampage Jackson appeared in a disgusting online video in which he makes light of sexual assault by pretending to attempt to rape a woman in a parking garage using chloroform and zip ties.

Even after a coalition of women's groups, clergy and academic expressed outrage over Jackson's behavior and called for his removal from a cage fighting event in Chicago, the UFC allowed him to compete on national television.

One prominent UFC fighter wrote on Twitter, "Rape is the new missionary", while another UFC fighter write "If a rape van was called a surprise van, more women wouldn't mind going for rides in them".

UFC President Dana White has set a despicable example by repeatedly using abusive language that is derogatory towards women.

These public displays of violence, hate and misogyny are all the more troubling in light of the fact that cage fighting is being actively marketed to children through toys, video games and clothing.

Today, children as young as seven years old are participating in cage fighting tournaments and training in UFC gyms. These are online videos showing children punching and kicking each other from behind chain-link fences while adult spectators clap and cheer.

Why in a state that has just suffered the second deadliest school shooting in history, would we even consider exposing our children to the violent misogyny and perverse forms of masculinity that are celebrated in the world of cage fighting?

We strongly urge you to protect our children from these violent spectacles and maintain the ban against cage fighting in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and attention.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you very much for your testimony. Are there any questions?
Representative Clemons.

REP. CLEMONS: Good afternoon, Miss Mason. Thank you, Chairman for the opportunity. A couple of questions, if I may.

When you say mixed martial arts, do you know what form of the martial arts that sport encompasses?

MELISSA MASON: From my understanding, it is mixed style that includes judo, different things from different styles of martial arts, hence mixed martial arts.

REP. CLEMONS: So, fair to say, judo, karate, jiu jitsu and correct me if I'm wrong because I'm not knowledgeable of how many forms of mixed martial arts, but those that we've mentioned, do you think are, do you know of how many children that are involved in these sports?

You look at, across the nation in our urban and even suburban communities how many parents take their children to learn these forms of martial arts. Am I fair? Is that a fair assessment?

MELISSA MASON: I don't know how many children participate in martial arts, but I do think that mixed martial arts is a euphemism for a variety of fighting techniques that include choking out, you know, opponents until they pass out, knees to the, even elbow to the head, et cetera as I said.

REP. CLEMONS: Well, that would, I might, can accept that but with the legalization of this, this would prevent and mitigate and deter those number of incidents occurring during a match, I would imagine.

MELISSA MASON: It has not, but it continues to happen in states even where it's legal.

REP. CLEMONS: Well, if it's not monitored and legalized I would imagine that those aspects of the sport would fall under that purview.

But another question. When you say, a characterization, you call it a blood sport.

COMMITTEE

If you look at boxing, hockey, any sport that engages in a physical activity, even basketball at some point in time a participant might become bloody.

So the characterization that I've been hearing today about being a blood sport, I think that that's disingenuous there because there's other sports that result in cuts that we watch for the sport. I don't think we watch it for the violence. Maybe some people do. I'm speaking for myself.

So --

MELISSA MASON: For the record, I did not refer to it as a blood sport.

REP. CLEMONS: No, no, well in your testimony here if I'm mistaken, and even up until your testimony it's been characterized as a blood sport. Even my colleague earlier called it a blood sport, so I take umbrage to that characterization there when it relates to other sports that, like I said, that I alluded to.

That's it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. DARGAN: Representative.

REP. VERRENGIA: I have a question. Good afternoon. Are you familiar with the NFL?

MELISSA MASON: Yes.

REP. VERRENGIA: In brief, what's your thoughts about the NFL the National Football League?

MELISSA MASON: My thought about the NFL or the sport, or do I watch it? Do I watch football?

REP. VERRENGIA: Well, I guess where I'm going with it is, when you were describing the fighting and what's in it, comments about rape,

COMMITTEE

vulgarity, violence, et cetera, if I missed the beginning of it and didn't hear you talking about fighting, I would have thought you were describing the NFL.

We have peewee football teams where children grow up playing football, et cetera and we see that type of violence. So if you had, I'm not saying two wrongs will make a right, but I was just curious from the way you were describing your views on this fighting.

The reason why I asked the question of your thoughts on the NFL because between the two, if you ask me in my opinion, there's not much difference.

Just given that we just came off the Super Bowl, the most watched sporting event in the entire world, I just find your comments interesting. Thanks.

REP. DARGAN: Representative Giegler.

REP. GIEGLER: Thank you for coming before us today. I have a question. Your organization, do you also take a stance on violent video games, any kind of RAP or any reality TV?

MELISSA MASON: Well, you know, one of the reasons why in our union, and I think Miss Pelletier spoke on kind of, one of our issues with Station, UNITE HERE in terms of the 88 unfair labor practices.

But if I can just speak on a local level with what I think about, you know, the fighting coming to urban areas like New Haven, for instance, where I live, you know, our members in New Haven have, and their allies have really advocated for, and really pushed the board of aldermen there to enact a legislative agenda that addresses a few key things.

One is jobs, job creation. But, and you know, I believe that there are a number of ways that jobs can be created in this state.

And you know, two other legislative priorities include, you know, reduction of violence and then also a comprehensive youth agenda, you know.

And when I think about bringing mixed, you know, yet another violent element into the City of New Haven, you know, I think it runs counter to what we're really trying to do in the City, and I think a lot of cities and municipalities across this state are trying to do, to reduce violence and to figure out positive and constructive things for youth to do.

REP. GIEGLER: All right. But, all right, you're alluding to the fact that this is part, violence is part of your legislative agenda?

MELISSA MASON: I'm saying, this is why, this is one reason why our union, at least on a local level would be interested in an issue like this.

REP. GIEGLER: All right. But if you're choosing as part of your legislative agenda a reduction of violence, then I would think that you would broaden your horizons to just focusing on something that is not currently, well it's in our states at the casino, not monitored, but it's not being regulated in the state, that you should be going after, if you're really looking at something for young people, I would think you would be looking at the violent video games because that has surely come to the forefront in a lot of what's happening in the country with our young people and also with the RAP and reality TV, and that doesn't seem to be on your agenda.

So why did you choose something that is not currently in our state as something legal, but is happening in our casinos currently?

MELISSA MASON: Well, as a previous speaker said, you know, it's happening in other states with certain consequences and creating a certain environment, you know, and also as she said that, you know, like we do take issue with the company that is running UFC fighters and particularly the way they treat their workers, you know. That is, like that is another aspect of it.

What I came here to talk about is another aspect, which I think a lot of our members and our members, friends, families and allies care about, which is, in particular, the violence that is consistently (inaudible) misogyny as well.

I don't know. I personally do take issue with, you know, with the allusions to rape and the joking about it, although it very well may happen in other sports, I don't see why we want to invite yet another spectacle to continue that and tell, and say that it's okay.

REP. GIEGLER: But the previous speaker was here on behalf of the labor unions and their objection to it. So is the labor union part of your legislative agenda?

MELISSA MASON: I'm here representing Bob Proto, International Vice-President of UNITE HERE.

REP. GIEGLER: Well you haven't exactly answered my question, but thank you for coming.

REP. DARGAN: Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So Melissa, thanks for being here and I want to thank you

for your articulate testimony and the advocacy that you obviously, I think, deeply believe in.

I have to say, though, I'm probably not exactly on the same page because my understanding of this is that it is highly regulated. I understand there's a labor dispute in another state, so that's not us.

But, you know, the sport that we're talking about here is highly regulated. You know, I'll tell you. My daughter, both my kids, but my daughter particularly, you know, started out with karate and went to judo and then got away from it a little bit, but as she became a teenager and a little bit older, she was traveling a lot and of course, as I wasn't there, being the frenetic parent that I am, I made her, you've heard of (inaudible). I made her not only brush up on her martial arts but I made her take intense course in (inaudible).

And I had a chance to watch it, and I have to tell you, I was actually horrified at the training. However, when it was all said and done and, you know, she continues to be a traveler, never to be in one spot, I can tell you that I rest a lot easier at night knowing that she has had that kind of experience and training.

And then I go back to this and I, you know, in coming from an urban area, there are a lot of youngsters who want to participate and in a legal, regulated way and that's the intention, I think of the endeavor.

So, I understand, you know, what you're talking about because yes, many sports, NFL, whatever, go awry and individual players, horrible representatives and have made terrible choices and examples.

COMMITTEE

But I think those, you know, are individual instances, and because this is a regulated, highly regulated and having witnessed some of the events, I've watched that regulation.

And I just have to say from a women's perspective there's something reassuring about having martial arts and self defense kind of subliminally there. But thanks for appearing before us.

REP. DARGAN: further questions? Representative.

REP. KUPCHIK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for being here. I think, I probably take a little bit different approach than my colleagues.

I've seen this thing on the Internet and I personally equate it to wrestling or professional wrestling or the WWE, you know. It draws young people in because it is very violent and you're right. I think they say things that are, something I never would have let my child watch or participate in.

And on the other hand, I would say that as a former Pop Warner mom and I'm sure Pop Warner, you have that in New Haven, that program that fosters, I believe, a very different set of values for young people and there is a strictness, and if you are out of line or if you behave poorly or if you do something bad in school or even off school grounds, you're not allowed to play and that's the same thing in football, even in high school football.

So I don't see the correlation between the NFL and cage fighting. I think it's very different.

Would you say that you think that having this activity or this cage fighting would be

detrimental to what some of the programs are in New Haven for the youth or the at risk youth?

MELISSA MASON: I think that's something that we'd have to think about very carefully in terms of introducing that as an activity, you know.

I know, you know, there's boxing gyms in New Haven and I'm not, you know, I'm not here to talk about New Haven's legislative agenda specifically, you know. I am, you know, testifying on behalf of Vice-President Bob Proto.

But I do think that that would be something to really think about as, you know, the Legislators and alderpersons in New Haven are figuring out a comprehensive youth agenda to ensure that youth have as many opportunities and things to do keeping them off the street, keeping them away from violence as possible.

REP. KUPCHIK: Thank you. Thank you for being here.

REP. DARGAN: Representative Clemons.

REP. CLEMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the second time. Yes, Miss Mason. I'm going to read part of your testimony when you say here in the wake of the tragic mass shooting in Newtown it is unthinkable that lawmakers in any jurisdiction would risk exposing our children to an activity that involves extreme violence and brutality.

With that said, could you, well first of all, I think it trivializes the heinous incident that occurred in our state in Newtown at Sandy Hook Elementary School to equate or correlate that incident with this sport.

But could you explain to us the correlation between this sport and that event, or that incident?

COMMITTEE

MELISSA MASON: I, it is in no way my intention to trivialize what happened in Sandy Hook, and I apologize if that's how it came across.

And I don't, you know, I don't mean that as a comparison between the two events, and what, you know, what we're trying to express here is that, you know, there's violence in a lot of places, you know, and we want to really be careful about introducing even more violence, especially the violence that's targeted toward children, you know, and children as spectators of that violence.

REP. CLEMONS: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Senator.

SENATOR AYALA: Good afternoon, Miss Mason.

MELISSA MASON: Good afternoon.

SENATOR AYALA: Thank you for your testimony. I appreciate the comments that you made in regard to violence and how you correlate the violence that happens in MMA and the exposure that it has to children.

As it stands right now, there are no events happening in Connecticut, so it's a little bit difficult to correlate what might happen, what could happen to something that's not happening right now.

But the reality is that it is on TV because I've seen it advertised and I know that there have been several events and I guess that they're promoting this a bit more on TV, and I have a pretty quick solution to this.

I have a 16-year-old son. If I don't want my son to see it, I shut off the TV. If I don't want my son to have any ideas of MMA, to participate or anything, I don't buy a ticket

COMMITTEE

for him to go see it in any one of the 48 states in the United States.

That's my job as a parent, and I would hope that parents across the State of Connecticut, if they feel as passionately as you feel, that this sport promotes violence, that they take that option.

They don't have to be subjected to it. They don't have to watch it on TV. They don't have to visit the Webster Arena in the City of Bridgeport or the XL Center in Hartford or anywhere else that they're going to show it, that they just don't buy the ticket and they don't go.

I think that's the job of parents, to measure and protect their children and if there are instances where they think that something might be too violent, they just don't go.

My son is 16 and there are certain movies that he may want to see and I may feel that are just not appropriate for him whether it's a level of violence or other suggestive material that might be on there, and I say no. And I think that's something that we should do.

But now, for the rest of the people who may see this as a sport, that may see this as having a particular skill set that one acquires through years of training, years of practice and would want to go, then I find it very difficult to get it to a point where I'm going to censor what somebody else is going to see or not see.

And it's not a question, it's more of a comment, but if you have any remarks toward that I'd be happy to hear or not. Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Representative Zupkus.

REP. ZUPKUS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you coming here and I do understand the violence. I have young children myself and I do turn the TV off a lot and monitor movies.

But I wanted to let you know that I have a friend that lives in another state and her son loves this, and at first I was like, on my gosh, you know. And I have to tell you, he has turned out to be a wonderful young man.

It actually gave him some discipline in his life and focus. So while, you know, other things play part, it actually did, he did gain some great attributes from that.

My daughter takes karate. I, too, like Senator Hartley appreciate that hopefully someday she'll be able to take care of herself. She's 12 now, but that, too, again, has given her focus and respect.

So while it is, you know, I do tend to see it maybe violent a little bit, it does, for some, it has given them some good attributes.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you. Further comments?
Representative Hampton.

REP. HAMPTON: Thank you. Thanks for being here. You know, I appreciate the comments about, you know, regulating it and making it safer and the fact that people cannot watch it on TV or to go an event.

But I think you're talking about maybe does it set the table, and I know you made the correlation between Sandy Hook, and I see the connection. You're concerned about fostering and continuing a climate of hatred and again, I have to see this for myself. But you know, you mentioned the neo-Nazi tattoos and the

promotion of rape and just the promotion of hatred.

I can appreciate maybe the actual physical nature of the sport. You know, we have physical contact in football and other sports, but the promotion of rape and racist attitudes is a concern.

And even though municipalities and the state needs the revenue, I appreciate your concern that it might cheapen our society in the long term, so I thank you for raising some good issues to think about.

REP. DARGAN: Yes, Representative.

REP. ROVERO: Thank you, Mr. Dargan. Quickly, I can realize the sport in MMA, the idea of a very violent sport. I must tell you that as a former football player that received scholarships to play in football, brother of someone who went to Dartmouth who would never have went otherwise if he didn't play football, I think you have a sport that wants to come into the area that's probably less violent than football.

I have two grandchildren that play hockey, two three times a week in games, organized games in prep schools. If you've ever seen hockey, you know how violent that is.

I think we're trying to limit a particular sport, that if parents want to limit this sport, let them limit it.

But on the other hand, I do not think as a state that we should pick and choose what sport we think is more violent than the other. I've watched MMA on television and I'm going to be honest with you. I don't think it's any more violent, in fact it might be less violent than

your boxing matches, than your football games and your hockey games.

So honestly, I really have a problem with trying to say this one particular sport cannot come into the State of Connecticut because it's too violent. Thank you very much.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you. Representative Gonzalez.

REP. GONZALEZ: Thank you. Miss Mason, I'm here listening to, for a couple of hours now, listening to different testimony and there are different things, but when it comes to this sport, you're not the first one that connects this one with what happened in Newtown.

And honestly, I would like to say that it's not fair. You know, using what happened in Newtown because people don't like this sport and using what happened in Newtown because you know, agreeing with this sport or whatever reason I don't think is fair.

You know, what happened in Newtown happened in Newtown and I think that we can use that maybe to help, you know (inaudible) in Newtown or maybe to avoid what happened, but this sport, because this sport, doesn't mean that we're not going to allow this sport and this is going to happen the same thing that happened in Newtown is going to happen in Bridgeport, Hartford or whatever.

Honestly, you know, with all due respect, I don't think that it's fair that people use what happened in Newtown just because they don't like this sport. Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you. Further comments?
Melissa, I thank you very much for coming.
Tell Bob I said hi and thank you very much.

MELISSA MASON: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: The next presenter is Al Connal.

ALLEN CONNALL: Good afternoon. I'd like to thank the Honorable Members of the Joint of Public Safety and Security Board for letting me testify today in support of Bill HB 5277.

My name is Allen Connal and I've been a resident of Connecticut for 51 years and I am the President and owner of Conn-Com Incorporated, which is a production company that was established in 1987. We have had offices in Greenwich, Fairfield, and now we're currently located in Bloomfield, Connecticut.

My wife and I have five children. We live in Simsbury, right next door, and we are the production company that in 1994, long before Station Casinos was ever involved in UFC, started to produce the ultimate fighting. So I have produced a couple of hundred UFC shows over many years and in the majority of the states, as well as around the world.

It's a great opportunity where my company can actively go into different states, work hand in hand with the local unions, hire several hundred people, as well as a lot of vendors, whether it's the AV vendor, generator companies, office trailers. We work hand in hand with local hotels for several hundred rooms per week when we're involved, and you know, that's the overview of what my company does.

But again, we work hand in hand with the unions. If we were to go to the XL Center or the Webster Bank Arena, which is a tremendous facility, and I've been down there with my children, my three boys who do play hockey and occasionally that does get violent to watch the Sound Tigers. We go to the XL Center.

COMMITTEE

And again, it's nice to be able to go in and actively hire free lancers in the local market whether they're camera operators, audio technicians, and again, seeing that I've lived here my entire life, it would almost be nice to come home and hire a lot of technicians who are friends to be involved with the UFC.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you for coming to testify. Senator.

SENATOR AYALA: Thank you for your testimony. A question that I have in mind is, when an event like this takes place, what would be the average amount of individuals that it would take to put on an event like this? In other words, how many people would you hire to make the production come off?

ALLEN CONNAL: The average number including TV, because we're responsible for pretty much every element from surveying the venue, to coming in and producing an in-house show, as well as a TV show, with union labor, TV labor, it would average about 150 people per show.

Actually, I stand corrected. Two hundred.

SENATOR AYALA: Two hundred?

ALLEN CONNAL: Yeah.

SENATOR AYALA: Okay.

ALLEN CONNAL: And that would be for several days. Typically, it's a week of work that we're involved with from the beginning process of shooting interviews, editing on site and we start load in two days prior to the show, so again, it's not a one-day situation but it's several days that are involved for each individual who's involved.

SENATOR AYALA: So it's several days of work.

ALLEN CONNALL: Several days of work, yeah.

SENATOR AYALA: A follow up question. What's the general attendance, approximate, I know, I mean, venues are different. You have larger venues, smaller venues, but in your experience, in your opinion of doing these types of shows for the years that you have done, I would imagine that there's some kind of cost estimate that you're saying, this is what we can expect to come to any given show, our low end and our high end.

What would be those numbers?

ALLEN CONNALL: Yeah, for an event in Connecticut, and I'll use Connecticut as a specific, I would think that, and this would be an average, you'd get anywhere from 8,500 to 11,000 people to an event. And a lot of that, obviously, is dictated with a good card and athletes that they would like to see compete, and it can go anywhere up to 12,500 or the capacity of the venue.

SENATOR AYALA: Another follow up question if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman.

In your experience in working with the different places that you go to, what is generally the response from the business community, i.e., your different chambers of commerce, your restaurant associations, hotel associations when you guys come into town?

ALLEN CONNALL: Really well received because there's that much, as far as not only my people, but the people who come from the fighters, the people who come with them, there's a huge increase in business for the community and nine out of ten times, and I don't know what the tenth would be, the week is a positive

111 February 7, 2013
pat/gbr PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY 11:00 A.M.
COMMITTEE

situation where the hotels are happy, the restaurants are happy.

Very rarely have we ever walked away when there wasn't a good situation for the entire community.

SENATOR AYALA: Thank you for your testimony and thank you for the information.

REP. DARGAN: Representative Clemons.

REP. CLEMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. From your telecast, how far or in terms of the viewing audience, how far would it reach and what would be, if any, the benefit to the, to your production company as well as the venue and the, I guess the marketing of the state?

ALLEN CONNALL: The reach, depending upon what level of show and the way that the mixed martial arts and specifically the ultimate fighting is run now with their partnership with Fox Network is, there are three different networks on Fox, (inaudible) and the Fox Network as well as a pay per view.

So, depending on a pay per view, a big pay per view for the UFC and they don't publish those numbers but if I was to make an educated guess, it could go from 800,000 down to 500,000 people.

As far as Fox and their networks, they can have anywhere upward of several million homes, depending on the on-air rating and obviously what it's up against, whether it's against a basketball playoff game or an NFL game, that will always vary, but several million where again, in a positive television production, you hope that it comes off well for the state and everyone involved.

COMMITTEE

REP. DARGAN: Representative Hampton.

REP. HAMPTON: Had we known you were from Simsbury, we would have put you up first, so I apologize. You're at the center of the universe. Welcome. It's nice to see you and I look forward to meeting you and hopefully meeting with you and actually witnessing one of your events because I don't know that world at all, you know, so I look forward to that opportunity.

I did want to ask you to speak to some of the testimony and comments relative to racist, accusations of racism and anti-gay and some other issues, and how you speak to that, just give you an opportunity to talk about it. Thank you.

ALLEN CONNALL: Sure. And you know, this is only one of the things that my production company actually produces. We produce events for ESPN, NBC, CBS and I think one of the gentlemen, someone mentioned it, and again, I've been involved with this long before Zuffa was involved, when it really wasn't regulated closely and athletes were held to behave on what they expect as an acceptable level.

And you know, it's like the NFL. There are bad representatives in the NFL, the NHL, the NBA, and I think what they're referring to would be the individual case, and certainly not mixed martial arts fighters as a whole.

You actually would be surprised if you ever sat down with a Rich Franklin and some of the other gentlemen who was a former teacher, well educated, well spoken, and again, the unfortunate incidents are the exception rather than the rule in my 20 plus years of being involved.

113

February 7, 2013

pat/gbr

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

11:00 A.M.

COMMITTEE

REP. HAMPTON: If I may, just to follow up. So in the ratings so to speak, are there episodes where they're interacting with each other or the audience where there's expletives or --

ALLEN CONNALL: No. No. And what we actually do have for network television is a delay, where if there is any vulgarity, we'll actually kill the audio, so we have a five-second delay if there's any vulgarity, which we'll avoid.

REP. DARGAN: Representative Yaccarino.

REP. YACCARINO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your testimony. Just one quick question. In each state, do you know how much TV revenue is brought into the state through the TV contract? An estimation?

ALLEN CONNALL: You know, I know Zuffa does have all that information, who's the owning parent company of the UFC and I don't want to give an incorrect number because I'm not intimately involved, but they do have it's, I believe and I don't want to be held to this, but several million dollars.

REP. YACCARINO: For the state.

ALLEN CONNALL: For the state.

REP. YACCARINO: Right. Thank you.

ALLEN CONNALL: Right, businesses and the local --

REP. YACCARINO: Local businesses you're saying? Some of the TV revenue would go to the state, if I read that correctly. Is that correct?

ALLEN CONNALL: And that's, I'm lucky. I'm held to be responsible and produce a good show. I don't have to get into the money side of it too much.

COMMITTEE

REP. YACCARINO: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you. Further questions? Hearing none, thank you very much. Next presenter is Sheila Matthews. Is Sheila Matthews here? She's not here.

The next presenter is Gary, Ansonia. Do all the valley boys want to come up together? We get you out at one time, since you've been sitting here. Gene and Gary. If Gentile stayed around we would have got you out of here, you know?

GARY PARKER: Representative Dargan, Senator Hartley, other distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for offering us this opportunity today to testify.

We are all here today to endorse the support for House Bill 5278 AN ACT AUTHORIZING FIREFIGHTERS TO CONDUCT CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING BOOT DRIVES ON STATE HIGHWAYS.

My presentation is made on behalf of the officers and members of the Derby Fire Department and as such, I respectfully ask this Committee to report favorably for the proposed bill.

It is the understanding of our department, permitted operations that would be allowed under this proposed bill would exclude all boot drives on limited access highways and we take no exception to that and fully endorse that stipulation.

In Derby we have two major state roads passing through our municipality, Route 34, which is a major connector from New Haven to Newtown and Route 8, is a limited access highway north to south.

COMMITTEE

Following the tragedy in Sandy Hook, firefighters throughout Connecticut held boot drives for the benefit of the Sandy Hook Fund. They didn't have any hindrance from any police departments. We would have been out there also, except for the Derby Police directive.

Our situation in Derby is an isolated incident. Boot drives continue to be held in Connecticut on state-owned local roads. No one else seems to have this problem.

We would like to be able to conduct our boot drives on local roads within our cities and towns that are state owned. I emphasize the word local. We are not seeking to use multiple lanes, limited access roads such as Route 8 or Route 25 in our area.

We ask your serious consideration and approval of this bill. I thank you for listening to my presentation.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you very much. Since there's no questions, thank you very much for your testimony.

CHARLES STANKYE, JR.: Thank you.

SENATOR HARTLEY: We'd like to invite James Donohue of West Hartford.

JAMES DONOHUE: Distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. My name is Attorney James Donohue and I'm here to give testimony in support of House Bill 5277 AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS.

I have provided written testimony, but I wanted to take the opportunity to clarify a couple of issues that I've seen here today listening to the testimony.

COMMITTEE

First, there's been a lot of vitriol that has been splashed on to the UFC and the members that are going to be testifying here today.

I want this Committee to understand that it was not the UFC specifically that came into the State of Connecticut and have been pushing for this bill.

Approximately seven years ago, with Senator Jonathan Harris and myself who instituted the first bill. Unfortunately, it didn't really get all that far and in the last few years it's certainly gotten farther, with the help of UFC as well as other businesses in the community.

The biggest thing, I think, is happening here today is possibly missing the forest for the tree. While the UFC is certainly the biggest and arguably the best in the business and would bring a one-time large amount of revenue into the state, that's not the only revenue that would be generated.

If you allow mixed martial arts to be legalized within the State of Connecticut, you're allowing all the other small-time promoters, and even larger promotion such as Bellatore to come into the area, not just the UFC.

It also should be realized that mixed martial arts has been in the State of Connecticut for a relatively long time. UFC itself had run events out of Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods, ultimately stopping their working with the casinos.

But there's a known commodity here in the State of Connecticut. It would certainly be crass to say that it's specifically an extremely violent sport. It's a blood sport. The safety of the fighters is first and paramount to the situation.

COMMITTEE

I believe it was actually the Zuffa and UFC in particular that fought to bring this regulation in after they had bought the UFC from the original owners, the Gracie family.

And it's certainly the small-time businesses such as maybe a VFW, a local restaurant, and certainly the local promotions that would benefit even greater than necessarily the state as a whole.

The state gains revenue specifically from the licensing of fighters. I believe there would typically be about a five to ten percent tax on ticket sales, not just for the UFC but for any MMA sanctioned fight that would happen in the state.

So you have the promotion such as Bellatore, as well as other smaller companies. In fact, this, I started working with Senator Harris specifically due to a declaratory statement that came out from the Attorney General about six or seven years ago wherein he stated not that MMA was banned, per se, but that it was not legal to run a prize fight under MMA.

This situation --

SENATOR HARTLEY: No. I was just going to remind you James, that the bell means three minutes.

JAMES DONOHUE: I understand. I'm sorry.

SENATOR HARTLEY: If you could summarize, we'd appreciate it.

JAMES DONOHUE: I just wanted to get that point out that it's not banned per se in the State of Connecticut, it's just that because it's not sanctionable under the Boxing Commission as it states right now, the law will not allow for a prize fight with mixed martial arts.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thanks very much, James.

Questions from Committee Members? Seeing none, thanks very much for staying and your testimony.

Charles Dowd, Harbor Yards. Good afternoon, Charles.

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: Madam Chairwoman, Members of the Committee, thank you for listening to my testimony in support of Proposed Bill 5277. I've submitted written testimony and I don't think it's necessary to go line by line. Certainly you can read it at your leisure.

I do want to hit some of the highlights. MMA coming to the State of Connecticut is a financial boon for buildings like Webster Bank Arena, XL, its employees and the surrounding areas.

Our building is about economic development and generation of downtown Bridgeport. When we have events such as MMA, such as the upcoming Women's Regional, our downtown is vibrant, full of life. You can't find a restaurant reservation or you can't get into some of our bars and clubs. It makes a huge difference for bringing people into the downtown. They have never been there and given them a positive experience.

The numbers are overwhelming. The MMA is practiced in over 100 countries and 48 of the 50 states, Connecticut and New York being the two holdouts.

Part of the challenge I find is that MMA is not UFC. UFC happens to be a practitioner of it, you know. It's like saying, well, we can't have football because we don't like the NFL.

Some of the points that were raised today, certainly MMA is violent. It's a combat sport. However, MMA and UFC in particular, welcomes regulation. As a matter of fact, in the proposed bill there's a five percent ticket tax above and beyond the ten percent the state receives and part of that funds the regulation of these fighters to ensure that they remain healthy and get the protection that they need.

Having three sons who play football at Daniel Hand, I know a Friday night means ice packs and whirlpools. But I don't hear anyone clamoring to ban football because of its violence.

UFC is about to institute women's fights. It's expanded its world.

Another issue that I find challenging is the notion that the Marines dropped out of being a UFC sponsor because of some of the issues that were raised.

I happened to watch the UFC show from Chicago on the Fox Network, a national television broadcast and there were many national sponsors who were very proud to tie their name to the UFC brand and to that broadcast who would be very sensitive to some of the allegations that were raised.

Finally, you know, my challenge is, using Connecticut jobs, vendors and fans as leverage to address a cause in Nevada I find unconscionable. I understand the solidarity of the labor movement and I come from a unionized family.

However, there are methods and channels of addressing that within the State of Nevada as well as through the federal courts.

COMMITTEE

So to effectively hold hostage Connecticut, its fans and the economic benefits that MMA would bring is simply unfair.

I thank you for your time and I welcome any questions you might have.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thanks very much, Charles.
Questions from Members of the Committee? Yes.
Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA: Charlie, good afternoon. First and foremost let me just thank you for your testimony and also thank you for the fine work that you do at Harbor Yard Arena, or excuse me, Webster Arena. It's a phenomenal place, great, great gem. It really talks about all the great stuff that happens in Bridgeport.

I just wanted to just reiterate just the idea of all that Webster Bank does, whenever the Arena is packed and what happens for businesses in our downtown area, it's just a tremendous, tremendous windfall for the City.

If this were able to get passed into law, what would you envision, how many of these events would you be able to put on in a year?

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: Well, we're subject to the MMA providers, how many they would want to do based on what they think would draw. We would welcome as many as possible, three to four a year possibly.

SENATOR AYALA: And what is capacity at the Arena?

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: As you know, it varies based upon events, but UFC traditionally, or MMA, is a 360 degree type of event whereby the entire building is utilized.

If we're in that configuration we have a capacity of approximately 10,000 patrons.

COMMITTEE

SENATOR AYALA: Ten thousand. Thank you very much for your testimony.

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: Thank you.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thank you, Senator, for the questions. Yes, Representative Clemons.

REP. CLEMONS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon, Charles, and thank you for your patience and waiting today.

A couple of other follow up questions. Also, I want to concur with the sentiments of Senator Ayala, previous questions and statements. But specifically, when you have an event of this nature, how many bouts would you say could be given during one of these venues, in terms of different, is there divisions like you know, boxing, you have weight classes?

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: I don't know specifically how big a card is. I would imagine between six and eight fights during the course of a show.

REP. CLEMONS: And what would be the approximate length of time that a venue would proceed?

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: Multiple hours, three or four hours.

REP. CLEMONS: Okay. And then with that, how many employees would that encompass in terms of two that you have at the facility already and would those employees be unionized? In them two, how many employees would it generate above and beyond your current staffing?

CHARLES DOWS, JR.: A full house of 10,000 people would probably employ between 200 and 250 people during the course of a day.

As you imagined, as you certainly know, the concession workers are not there just for the

event. There's preparation and to service 10,000 people, police officers, firemen, EMTs.

In an event such as this I would liken to a WWE show where approximately 100 to 125 union members from (inaudible) would be employed to rig up the building as well as do the production, including the TV work. So it is, you know, we become a small city on a day like that.

REP. CLEMONS: So it would be a lucrative event spanning the whole gamut from the ancillary businesses around the Arena along with the providing for staff as well as vendors. So it would be lucrative.

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: Without question. It touches many people, many businesses, well beyond Webster Bank Arena confines.

For example, the State of Connecticut would benefit right away on parking, the structure parking garage next to our building, DOT receives a significant portion of the revenues received from there.

REP. CLEMONS: I think maybe Senator Ayala asked this question. What would be the maybe maximum number of events per year that you could have?

CHARLES DOWS, JR.: Again, you know, we would be welcome to what the market would bear. I don't know well enough how many you can do before you start to, you know, get patrons tired of the product. But right now it's incredibly hot in terms of an entertainment product and it's something that we'd be interested in presenting as often as possible.

REP. CLEMONS: Thank you very much. Thank you.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thank you. Further questions?
Representative Yaccarino.

REP. YACCARINO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for your testimony. I don't know if you could answer this question, but in cities where you have young people, do you see any growth of clubs as far as learning mixed martial arts. Like years ago, boxing clubs were big in towns and cities. Do you see any positive growth in that?

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: I'm not knowledgeable enough to say that. I would imagine that if it comes to the area and is presented more you might see that, much like a boxing club. Or certainly, when boxing was in heyday, I think every neighborhood had a boxing club.

However, it is, MMA is available via electronic means for any kid.

REP. YACCARINO: I would just say that just for an example for kids to learn more discipline in the art and a positive effect, if anything.

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: Absolutely.

REP. YACCARINO: I just didn't know if there was or wasn't. Maybe the venture of this sport would promote that in a safe and a good atmosphere.

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: We would certainly, we would welcome seeing that. Again, I don't feel comfortable enough to answer that not being part of the sport.

REP. YACCARINO: Thank you.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thank you, Representative Yaccarino. Representative Clemons.

REP. CLEMONS: Thank you, Madam Chair for the second time. Mr. Dowd, as a quick footnote to all the discussion that's been going on over the years leading up to the legislation again being presented before us, just to throw out this.

Food for thought. Would, hypothetical, if this legislation were to come to fruition, would your Arena along with the MMA folks, would you be willing to go on a, say, the stigma that's been associated with this? Would you be willing to work with say, MMA folks and the community at large to, I guess, educate and to ensure the regulatory legislation or the overseeing of this sport to where people could be educated and to, I guess ensure that the physicality of the sport would be adhered to to the fullest extent?

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: I think that's a two-part answer. I've spent over 20 years in the State of Connecticut involved in professional baseball as well as now, the arena business, and I've always been an advocate of bringing athletes to the community as a marketing tool for the most part.

Now, I don't control, per se, the athletes that would come into this, but I would imagine that the various factions would be interested in doing something like that. You know, it's marketing. It's touching people.

On the second part of the answer relative to the regulations, we would encourage strongly the regulation of this product by the state, and I think that MMA as an industry has done so in the other jurisdictions that they're in because it is, it's a combat sport.

However, it's, they want to provide their athletes with the best opportunity to work in a safe condition, which is somewhat paradoxical, but as safe as possible, and we encourage that, you know.

The state again, I believe that five percent that's an additional ticket tax goes directly toward funding the regulation of the sport,

muck akin to boxing in the State of Connecticut. Thank you.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thank you. No further questions. Thanks for being with us.

CHARLES DOWD, JR.: Thank you for your time.

SENATOR HARTLEY: And we have now been joined, since we're still talking about House Bill 5277, Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: Thank you, Madam Chair, Members of the Committee. I'm Representative Mary Mushinsky speaking in support of House Bill 5277 legalizing and regulating mixed martial arts.

I'm again, a co-sponsor of this bill, which would permit professional mixed martial arts matches to be held in the state, and to subject such matches to the same regulation that currently applies to boxing matches.

The Commissioner of Public Safety would be the most appropriate regulatory authority over such matches, requiring the registration of hosts of the matches, licensing to conduct the matches, imposing a tax upon the receipts of the matches to make the regulatory system revenue neutral, and to impose other safety requirements as necessary to protect the public.

This bill was requested by a constituent who pointed out that Connecticut has already authorized boxing and he would like to see his sport, mixed martial arts, be given the same state sanctioned status and meet statewide standards. The sport does have fans and instructors in Wallingford, and thank you for your consideration of our request.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thank you, Representative Mushinsky for being here and also your sticking

with the proposal. I have seen it a couple of years under your authorship. Questions to Representative Mushinsky? If not, thanks much for being with us.

REP. MUSHINSKY: And thank you for calling me a second time. Appreciate it.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Yes. And we now go back to our public list, Jennifer Jennings. Is Jennifer with us? Not seeing Jennifer, we're going to move right on to Michael Mersch.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Madam Chairman, thank you for, and the Members of the Committee, my name is Michael Mersch, and I thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you here today.

HB 5277

By way of a little background, I am the Senior Vice-President of Business and Legal Affairs and Assistant General Counsel for Zuffa, LLC, which is the parent company of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, UFC for short.

UFC or the ultimate fighting championships were mentioned a few times here today, so I first want to just offer that at any given point, I am happy and would love to answer any and all questions that might exist about the sport, my company and anything related to the business that we are hoping to be able to bring here to the State of Connecticut.

This is a, we've come before the Legislature here for a couple of years now and had a chance to sit down and I've had a chance to meet with a lot of different people and I think a lot of people, the nice thing is many people in this building are very educated about this subject. It's a pleasure to talk to most people about it and get out all the issues.

COMMITTEE

I think everyone is fairly familiar with the fact that mixed martial arts is one of the fastest growing sports in the world. MMA programming exists in Connecticut already. It's on broadcast television, free to air television. It's on pay per view. You can go to any of the, many of the taverns around the state and watch it on pay per view. It's happening at the Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun Casinos, and there are gyms that people train in this and use this as not just a method of fighting, but as a method of fitness.

It has really spawned a whole industry where people are training in this, families are training in this, gyms are opening up offering classes in the specific elements, not necessarily the fighting aspects of it but the elements to learn many of the things you've heard here today, to learn discipline, to learn respect for yourself, respect for your opponent, respect for your elders. So it is a very positive messaging that exists with a subculture to this sport.

So as I said, this sport is happening right now in the State of Connecticut. Because it's not properly regulated I think that there's probably some underground, illegal fights that are going on, which are unsanctioned, unregulated, without doctors. That's dangerous, obviously.

So again, what I'm asking with this bill is that the State of Connecticut be able to enjoy live events wherein the state can develop some economic revenue and economic benefit from holding these events.

And again, you've heard some of the testimony here before, the benefit to workers, the benefit to the arenas that want this. You've had conversations. Mr. Dowd was very

COMMITTEE

articulate with his comments. You also heard from the XL Center and I can tell you they want this just as badly.

But I also want to talk just a little bit about and clarify an issue that came up earlier. The owners of UFC, Zuffa, LLC as the parent company has absolutely no ownership interest in Station Casinos.

There is a commonality of a portion of the ownership in Zuffa, the UFC has a portion of the ownership of Station Casinos. But I don't work for Station Casinos and none of the people that work for the UFC can speak on their behalf or control any of the activities that they may be engaged in.

I just wanted to also just mention. coming up here shortly is the best example and best representative that I think can answer any questions you might have, one of our great up and coming light heavyweights, Glover Teixeira, who is a resident of Danbury, Connecticut and I think you're going to see that this is a Connecticut resident that is performing at the highest level of the sport. He would like nothing more than to be able to actually participate in this sport in his home state.

And I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you so much for your time.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thank you, Michael. Questions?
Yes, Representative.

REP. VERRENGIA: Good afternoon.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Good afternoon.

REP. VERRENGIA: Where is your company out of?

MICHAEL MERSCH: We are headquartered in Las Vegas,
Nevada.

COMMITTEE

REP. VERRENGIA: What's your target age? What's your target group?

MICHAEL MERSCH: You know, that's a great question. I think when the UFC first started, I think if you asked anybody, whether it's marketers or whether it's even the people who own the company, they would say that the target demographic for a UFC fan is probably an 18 to 35 year old, generally male audience.

The problem is that the UFC is now in its 20th year of operation, so those original fans that were fans when they were 18 to 35 years old are now 20 years older, and those fans have brothers and sisters and wives and children that they are starting to get more and more interested in the sport in and of itself and the product and as I mentioned earlier, sort of a lifestyle that comes along with it, with healthy living, with training in martial arts to help develop discipline and things of that nature.

So it's really become broader than that. Approximately 40 percent of our audience are actually female from the demographics that we've done.

REP. VERRENGIA: And if this were to pass, the previous speaker didn't know, how many events would you be looking to bring to the state in other restrictions, as far as say for example, Bridgeport? You know, is any particular area once they have an event, are they kind of restricted? If you could just shed some light on that?

MICHAEL MERSCH: Yeah, absolutely. Another great question. So, I mean, just in terms of the process of this all, obviously, you know, there's a lot of work to be done even after if it's in the wisdom of this Legislature we could

get this bill passed, our next step then would be to come back to Connecticut and continue to work with the Department of Public Safety, with the administrator of the Boxing Commission, Mr. Langlois over here, making sure we have the right regulations in place because obviously the framework here is a great starting point, but we still need to make sure that all the proper safety rules and regulations, medical testing, all those things are in place to make sure that the sport can adequately run here.

And again, I understand that those things take time, but once that process is done, we would look to get Connecticut on our schedule as soon as possible.

Again, as a company, we do shows all over the world. At this point we've done something in the neighborhood, well, we've been in five of the seven continents so far. You know, we're trying to move this sport because it is growing so much internationally.

But again, if you have a good market, you have a market that has a fan base that is willing to patronize this product, we're going to bring the event there. You know, it's all about showing up and I think the winners of all that are everybody involved. The arenas win. The workers at those arenas win, and we of course are happy with that as the promoter of the show.

REP. VERRENGIA: What is your market research telling you about Connecticut?

MICHAEL MERSCH: Great question. I mean again, above average in terms of disposable income. Our events, you know, again, tend to be watched on pay per view, which is obviously not something that's cheap but we have very strong

COMMITTEE

pay per view buys in this particular DMA market.

Again, we are confident that either an event here in Hartford at the XL Center or an event at the Webster Bank Arena would draw both, from all different markets.

The nice thing about our fans is that they travel and they spend money when they travel, so we are confident that if we were to do a show here in Connecticut, we wouldn't just be basing it on the assumption it would be all Connecticut residents.

We know for a fact we would draw New York residents and Massachusetts residents and really from all over New England and New Jersey and Pennsylvania as well.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Yes, Representative Giegler to be followed by Senator Ayala.

REP. GIEGLER: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for coming here again and I hope you're going to get home before we get clobbered tomorrow or you're here for life.

MICHAEL MERSCH: I hope so.

REP. GIEGLER: I have a question. How do you recruit your athletes and are they subcontractors to UFC or are they total employees, and no matter what venue you are at, they continue to be the same athletes.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Thank you. A great question, Representative. Our athletes, you know, if you look at sort of the model, I liken it, use the baseball model to try to get, I think it helps people to understand.

The UFC is the major league level of the sport. There is a few triple A teams, a few more

COMMITTEE

double A teams and then a whole bunch of single A teams and as, like in every other sport, as people kind of progress up the ranks from a smaller mixed martial arts promotion where they may only have a few hundred people actually attending their fight, as they kind of move up the chain as they continue to win, and you know, as they continue to advance their career with the advent of the Internet and all the other things of that nature, they can't help but get on the UFC's radar.

If we have somebody that comes up and they are an undefeated fighter over the course of many years, we certainly are going to start giving them a very serious look.

We have people on our staff that are called matchmakers, and they literally are, they watch videotape, they watch YouTube tape of fighters from all over the world. Then they just evaluate that talent looking at their strengths or weaknesses, their skill sets and then trying to figure out where is a good opportunity for that person to fit into the structure of where we're holding an event.

And again, obviously, even as a big promoter like the UFC, it's still great to have some local talent on a card and again, I mentioned Glover here earlier and you're going to hear from him in a second. I'm sure he'll tell you, he would love to participate in an event here in his home state. He just fought on a card in Chicago, had over 50 people travel from Connecticut to Chicago just to watch him fight.

So again, we love to have some local flavor in all the markets that we go to, but again, those things are just dependent on the individual skill level of the fighters we have.

REP. GIEGLER: Okay. So once they reach your level and then they're part of the UFC. Now I know you mentioned in your testimony that they are the best trained and conditioned.

So then do you continue to train and condition them under your purview then?

MICHAEL MERSCH: The athletes that participate in the UFC are independent contractors. The average times they fight are two times per year, so they really work for us twice a year.

And again, they may have a contract that indicates that they agree to exclusively fight for us under our promotional banner, for lack of a better term, for a short period time, but at the end of the day, most of our fighters have other businesses. They're trainers. They run gyms. They'll go out and sort of offer classes in different elements of the sports related to MMA, or you know, putting on classes in gyms around the country.

So they have their own methodology of deriving business. Many of them also have sponsors so they derive revenue through sponsorships much like a NASCAR athlete. If you see the different, you know, sponsorship banners that they wear on their clothing and on their cars, our fighters have a lot of the same opportunities.

REP. GIEGLER: So if, say you book an event, UFC books an event at the XL Center, they're all UFC fighters, but the individuals that come only work for you two times a year. So does that mean that at the various venues that you book that you're always having to put together X number of fighters at each one?

MICHAEL MERSCH: Yeah, Representative, a great question. We have over 425 fighters actively

COMMITTEE

under contract right now just in the UFC. And again, that may seem like a lot. We do about 35 shows a year all over the world.

And another question came up earlier, approximately how many fights we have per card. In the UFC we do anywhere from 10 to 12, sometimes 13 fights per card. But again, when you're talking about a lot of guys but obviously, these are professional level athletes and much like a football player is banged up and bruised after a game on Sunday, they need a couple days to recover, our athletes are the same way.

They'll put an eight to twelve-week training camp in to get ready for any given fight, and when they have that fight and expend all that energy, they need some down time in between when they fight and when they get prepared for the next fight.

So the average is about 2.2 times per year that our fighters are, you know, kind of ready to go. And like every other sport, sometimes there may be an injury issue that they have to get over. Maybe their hand is sore. Maybe their knee is sore, and like in any other sport it takes some recuperation time.

But when they're ready to train, they'll let us know and we'll kind of fit them back into our schedule wherever it makes sense.

REP. GIEGLER: It kind of brings another question, benefit-wise if they're injured and they're out. Now, how do they cover themselves for, under injury. Are they, you said they're in other businesses, a lot of them, so are they covering themselves for their insurance through their other business, or if they're injured under you, is that a workmen's comp claim?

MICHAEL MERSCH: Great question again. I'm happy to answer that. Again, because they're independent contractors there's no workers' comp issues specifically.

But what we have done as a company, because we understand that the athletes are the most important asset that we have, and I don't mean that in a bad way. They're the most important part of the company, right? Our job is just to make them. You know, into big stars and hopefully make them marketable.

But what the UFC has done and we're the only company in combat sports doing this, is about a year and a half ago we instituted what we call accident insurance coverage for all our fighters.

Meaning, if you have a contract in UFC, you get injured in any way, shape or form at any time, we cover your medical expenses.

It also applies, for instance, if the person was walking across the street and got hit by a car. It's really a comprehensive accident insurance policy that really can cover anything.

Now, again, it's not medical insurance from the standpoint that you can't go get a tetanus shot, but again, if there's an injury, which is what of course these guys are mostly concerned with, right?

They're training. They're getting ready to fight. They hurt their knee. Now they can't fight so they can't earn a living, we've got insurance to cover them for that and to pay for their medical charges so they can get back to being healthy so they can get back to making money.

REP. GIEGLER: Great. Thank you.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Thank you.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thanks. Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA: Mr. Mersch, thank you for your testimony today.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Thank you.

SENATOR AYALA: I'd like to see if you can respond. We've heard a lot of testimony today and a lot of the criticism that has been brought upon this sport is the violent nature of the sport.

Can you give me some kind of testimony to talk about the violence within the sport, the lack of, or the actual violence and what's allowed in the ring, as to what may not be allowed in the ring? Thank you.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Yes. Senator, thank you, another great question. I'm happy to talk about that. You know, again, I think the point has been made here by several people that, you know, in all major professional sports, most major professional sports, there's some element of contact.

Any time there's an element of contact, there's an opportunity or a situation where something can arise or somebody could get hurt.

The good news is there is sort of the perception of mixed martial arts versus the reality of mixed martial arts. And yes, these guys are tough guys. These guys are world-class professional athletes that operate at the highest level of this sport.

But I think if anybody's ever watched one of our events, 90 plus percent of the time when these fights get done, these guys aren't mad at

COMMITTEE

each other. These guys aren't antagonistic toward each other. They mostly get up and they give each other a hug and say, that was a great match, just like you would shake hands at the end of a basketball game.

There's been a couple of studies that have been done by independent sources, one from Johns Hopkins University, one from the British Journal of Medicine that compare the injury rates in boxing and MMA and again, they're not the same sports, but they're the closest thing that I think a lot of people associate, and they looked at the various types of injuries.

And what they found in those studies was that overall, when you just look at regular old injuries, you know, a sore hand, a bruise here, a cut there, there's no difference between boxing and MMA on just general, overall injuries.

Where there is a difference, though, is in the incidents of traumatic brain injury. When they compare, you know, the injuries that take place in boxing to MMA, significant decrease in the amount of head trauma in MMA.

And if you think about the nature of the two sports, it makes sense. Again, this is not to ban boxing. I grew up as a boxing fan. My background is, I used to be the attorney for the Nevada Athletic Commission. I love boxing. I have nothing bad to say about boxing.

But again, just the very structure of the two sports is different and there are a lot of things that are built in, safeguards that are built into MMA that are different and I think are better from the standpoint of actually protecting the athlete.

COMMITTEE

Obviously, the purpose, or the goal in an MMA Match is to, you know, land enough strikes to either outpoint your opponent or to concuss your opponent to the point where he can't continue in the event, in the fight.

Sometimes, you know, even after an opponent is concussed for a while, they're allowed to continue to be concussed. Most of the time in an MMA event if somebody gets hit where they're knocked down, the fight is stopped and very shortly after that point. There's not an opportunity to have repetitive head blows as you would see in a boxing event.

And I would also note that again, most injuries, even in boxing matches, don't happen during the match themselves. They happen in the training and the sparring that leads up to that.

When you train for 30 or 40 or 50 days, every day in a gym taking some head trauma when you're practicing boxing, that takes a cumulative toll.

And again, I think if you also look at some of the other factors in MMA, in MMA the fighters are wearing, they're in bare feet. Also in MMA the fighters are wearing much smaller gloves, so again, in terms of being able to protect the hand, and being able to generate as much torque as they do in boxing, it's just a different sport.

And I think that these medical tests they're out that MMA does have the safeguards in place to protect the people that participate in it and that those are the realities. That's the business reality and the actual reality of MMA versus what perception may display on television or something to that effect.

SENATOR AYALA: A follow up question, Madam Chair. You mentioned something about the Nevada Commission. I'm not sure what the whole terminology was on that.

In the 48 states that MMA is sanctioned and goes on, are there commissions in all those 48 states that prescribe certain rules and regulations of what's allowable and not allowable for your sport?

MICHAEL MERSCH: Excellent question, Senator. The answer to your question is, in 45 of the 48 states, it's really 48 and a half, and I'll explain that, 48 states where MMA is legal and thriving and happening every weekend.

In 45 of those states it is regulated by the state by some form of a state agency, call it an athletic commission or a boxing commission or whatever you will.

Three states, Montana, South Dakota and Alaska have MMA. It's legal. It's just unregulated, which again, I'm not a big fan of that. I'd rather see it regulated and all the fighters being kept safe. But in those three states they've not elected to regulate it at a state government level.

Obviously in New York and Connecticut are the two states where professional mixed martial arts is illegal. Amateur mixed martial arts is illegal here in Connecticut as well. However, in New York they allow unregulated and unsupervised amateur mixed martial arts in the State of New York right now.

In answering your question also just to add a little bit more color, I've worked with the majority of these jurisdictions all over the country and really all over the world. That's part of my duties with the UFC and the nice

COMMITTEE

thing is that most of these states have the exact same rules and regulations.

Nevada and New Jersey back in 2001 got together and established sort of the base-line rules for this, which are called the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts, and pretty much every other state has for the most part adopted, you know, cut and pasted those into their regular code.

So the nice thing is that you have very consistent rules and regulations across the country regulating the sport, and that also applies in Canada. Every province with the exception of Saskatchewan in Canada right now is regulating the sport as well, regulating it in Australia and places like that.

And anywhere new that the sport is popping up because it's such a new sport, I think as a default, everyone defaults back to how we handle the regulatory structure here in America.

SENATOR AYALA: Thank you for answering my question. I appreciate it.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR HARTLEY: Thank you very much. If there are no other questions? Oh, I'm so sorry, yes, Representative Hampton.

REP. HAMPTON: Thank you, Senator. Thank you for being here today. Thank you for your testimony. A couple questions.

An earlier testimony mentioned deaths in the sport. I don't know the statistics, maybe you could clarify the statistics on mortality related to this sport in its history, recent history, please.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Yes, sir, thank you. Another excellent question, because I did want to clear that up.

The report earlier that there were four deaths in America is not accurate. I can say, start with this. In the UFC, even prior to the time of the UFC in 1993 when it started, prior to the time that Zuffa owned the company, there has never been a death or a serious injury in the UFC.

In mixed martial arts as a broader sport, I am aware of one fatality that happened in Texas a few years ago, maybe 2008. One of the issues that is a little unclear from that is, the State of Texas Athletic Commission sort of petitioned a study on that to see what happened and some of the fighter's pre-fight medical testing, it was unclear whether he may have had a pre-existing brain condition that contributed to the person's death or whether it was strictly related to the fact that he engaged in an MMA contest in that state.

One of the nice things with this is that the states that are doing it the right way do require some sort of advanced medical head screening, an MRI, a CT scan of some kind. When a fighter is trying to begin their career thus establishing a base line, so if there's any other fights that come up where there's a knockout or any other significant head trauma, you can do another scan, compare those scans to make sure there's no, you know, not a pre-existing condition before they're even allowed to even get in a ring.

But again, relative to most of the sports, you know, I think that you can again, safely say that MMA is one of the safest sports out there. There really is, there's certainly no record of

COMMITTEE

where if a chronic issue of any death or even serious injury.

There have been some reported other deaths in what they call unregulated sports outside of the United States, which brings us back to exactly why we want to do this. We want it to be regulated.

It's not often you have a private business or an industry coming to the government saying, please tax us and please regulate us to keep the sport safe, and that's exactly why we're here today, is asking this Honorable body and really the whole Legislature to authorize the state to do just that to keep the fighters safe and to keep the sport safe.

REP. HAMPTON: Madam Chair, just a follow up question, please.

Is there within your profession a conscious effort, I hope not, to promote your fights using, you know, sexist or racist or anti-Semitic tactics?

MICHAEL HERSCH: Thank you, sir. That's absolutely a great question and I can answer that wholeheartedly, absolutely not.

The UFC prides itself on promoting the skill of our athletes, on promoting tolerance and understanding. We are about to have for the first time in mixed martial arts history and UFC history, two women headlining a UFC pay per view card later this month, two weeks from now.

One of the participants on that card is the first openly lesbian participant in a UFC fight and perhaps maybe in MMA, and we have, you know, we have not hidden that. We have not run away with that. We celebrated that. We're

COMMITTEE

happy about that. We're honored to have her fight for us.

Her opponent is a former two-time judo Olympian who, we're also celebrating her exploits and am excited to have women come into the UFC.

And for the record, the UFC as a company has never been opposed to women fighting in the company. It's really just been a matter of having enough of a talent base to create a division that you can have. Obviously, you can't have two people continue to fight each other over and over again. You want to have a whole depth of talent and that's, we think we're finally getting to that point right now and why we're starting to promote women's mixed martial arts.

And I would just comment also. I would say, you know, very similar to, unfortunately, very similar to other professional sports league, yes, we have had one or two fighters who on random occasions have made very, very poor decisions. And we've reprimanded them. We've dealt with those issues as best we can.

I'd also note that the UFC has a company, I believe we're the only one in the sport doing this. We require all of our fighters once a year to come in. We fly them to Las Vegas at our own expense. We put them through sensitivity training. We put them through sensitivity awareness. We put them through social media training, so they realize and understand that they are professional athletes and that working in the UFC they have a responsibility to be cognizant of what they're saying, what they're Tweeting, what they're Face Booking, and we take that very, very seriously as a company.

151

February 7, 2013

pat/gbr PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY
COMMITTEE

11:00 A.M.

Hopefully, I answered the question. We're very sensitive to that issue.

REP. HAMPTON: So that includes sexual harassment training?

MICHAEL MERSCH: Absolutely. As a company, internally, we do that. We require all of our employees do that, absolutely.

REP. HAMPTON: Thank you very much. I really appreciate it. Thank you, Senator.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Further questions? Hearing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

MICHAEL MERSCH: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: The next presenter is Glover Teixeira.

GLOVER TEIXEIRA: Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to talk over here. I'm not a big talker so I'm going to be quick.

My name is Glover Teixeira. I'm fighting for the Ultimate Fighting Championship. I live in Danbury, Connecticut with my wife, Ingrid, and my dream, I was born in Brazil, and my dream was to come to this country and I come here and later on I become legal here and now my dream is to be UFC light heavyweight champion and now comes this opportunity for me to speak over here and I want to be light heavyweight champion fighting in Connecticut in front of my crowd in front of my friends.

It is great to be here and as people talk about violence in a sport, there's a lot of fighters out there that is joking about, a lot of bad jokes, you know, and we talk, we (inaudible) like selling, selling fights. Like some people

HB 5277

they talk bad about you in front of the camera so people buy more of the papers.

When they come in the back over there and say, hey, man, don't get me wrong. I just talk like that just to sell more pay per view and to sell more fights. You know, I don't do this stuff. I can't even talk too much.

But I just respect them all and had a big fight with Quinton Rampage Jackson in Chicago. I think we have over 16,000 people in the arena. I think they sell over \$1.3 million in the gates, so it just was a big fight on Fox TV, so I was really happy about that.

He was talking a little bit before the fight and after the fight we became friends, so what I'm saying is, Connecticut is my adopted hometown and I want to be, I want to live there forever. I want to be there for as long as I live and I hope that one day I could be fighting in Connecticut.

I thank you for your time and I'm open to any questions.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you very much for coming to testify here this year. Representative.

REP. GIEGLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for your patience in waiting for us and I'm pleased that you are a resident of Danbury and we're happy to have you there and we'd like you to be able to stay there a little longer so you're not on the plane all the time traveling wherever you might have to go.

Now, just a question, you know. It was mentioned before that UFC has you maybe like two times a year, so are you fighting for other productions throughout the country?

153

February 7, 2013

pat/gbr

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY
COMMITTEE

11:00 A.M.

GLOVER TEIXEIRA: No. UFC is the only company. I mean, they take care of you pretty good. They, it's a great company. They, I mean I'm doing good with them and the exposure is so good that you get so much sponsorship.

You talk about the medical stuff and everything else. I mean, they take care of everything. And even if you get hurt and you stay a year and a half out or two years, it doesn't matter, I get paid bi-monthly from a sponsorship because UFC is such a big company, you know, and expose you so much, you know.

Sometimes some fighters make more money in sponsorships than they make in the fights.

REP. GIEGLER: You have, then do you have another job within the City of Danbury?

GLOVER TEIXEIRA: No. Just, right now just training.

REP. GIEGLER: And between the training, how many fights would you say that you've been in, say in the last year?

GLOVER TEIXEIRA: I signed a contract with UFC in May, I think it was April and I fought in May and I already had three fights and like I say, two fights a year. That's what they give to you but if you're not injured, if you're good through a fight, they give you a fight every three or four months.

REP. GIEGLER: Now, do you have the ability to train in Danbury. Is there a gym there that is adequate for you to train or do you have to go somewhere else?

GLOVER TEIXEIRA: Yeah. It's getting better now. I'm getting upgraded. I'm number five light heavyweight in the world, so it's getting more opportunity to bring people. My name is out

there, so people start coming from Florida, from California to train with me because the name exposure, oh, Glover lives in Danbury. Let's go over there and train. They call and they come and train. But before it was hard. Before, I had to go to California and do all the camp there, but now I've been planning to do the next camp all in Danbury.

REP. GIEGLER: Well, thank you so much and thank you for being here today.

GLOVER TEIXEIRA: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Other questions? No further questions, Glover, I'm just going to keep you around for the end of the Legislative Session because there's a number of other Legislators and lobbyists I need to get a good neck hold around, you know, when they give me a hard time.

So I wish you the best of luck and thank you very much for coming to testify.

GLOVER TEIXEIRA: All right. Thank you. Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: The next speaker is it Jeffrey, I'm not going to get the last name but I know he's with the Connecticut Boxing Commission.

JEFFREY DRESSLER: Attorney Jeffrey Dressler for the record. Thank you to the Co-Chairs and Committee Members. I am here with the Connecticut State Boxing Commission. I want to commend Attorney Mersch for an excellent job. He pointed out a couple of the things that I wanted to talk about.

The State Statutes regular professional and amateur boxing. They emphasize consistently the health, the safety and well being of the participants. The equipment, types of blows, the AA's length of rounds are all regulated.

HB5277

COMMITTEE

But moreover, with respect to the amateurs, there is a national insurance program run by USA Boxing that covers the boxers while training, tournaments, transportation. We don't have that in the proposal before this Committee.

The proposal is to legalize professional MMA, but it's silent with respect to the amateurs. Now, we know this is not going to take off, it has already taken off, and there will be many MMA clubs that will sprout up and there will be competitions.

You just don't walk into the professional arena. There are going to be amateur bouts. If we're legalizing the professional, what status are amateur bouts? And the regulations are different for the pros and the amateurs here in Connecticut.

I know there are regulations that are proposed with respect to regulating the sport to keep it safe. I am unaware of such as far as the boxing. USA Boxing allows registration from eight years old on. The JOs, Junior Olympics that from age 8 to 16.

So I think Attorney Mersch said that they would have to come back and revisit and it is exactly my point. I would like this to be revisited perhaps before the professional MMA is permitted because it will affect our kids. It will effect, I've been involved in boxing for over 30 years, martial arts in over 30 years and boxing for over 20 years. I'm very involved in the community on boxing gyms and martial arts.

But it's regulated. The kids are insured and I don't see that addressed in this bill before this Committee, and we cannot ignore it. I'll entertain any questions.

156

February 7, 2013

pat/gbr PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY
COMMITTEE

11:00 A.M.

REP. DARGAN: Any questions? Hearing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

JEFFREY DRESSLER: Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: The next presenter is Fred Balicki.

FRED BALICKI: Good afternoon. Mr. Chairman, Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, my name is Fred Balicki. I live in Manchester, Connecticut.

I'm speaking today in support of developing the Proposed Bill Number 5113 AN ACT CONCERNING POOL SAFETY AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS as introduced by Representative Dargan.

Thank you for having a public hearing on this issue. I'm going to abbreviate my recommendations since I turned in the subject report already.

I've been working at the Indian Valley YMCA in Ellington, Connecticut as a lifeguard for the past two years. I'm a retired Connecticut state employee, having worked at the Departments of Developmental Services, DDS, and Public Health. My previous job at DDS was Quality Review Specialist Supervisor, a role that I performed for 21 years.

I strongly encourage the Public Safety and Security Committee to establish a statewide policy and standards for public school pool safety that promotes vigilance and protections for swimmers by including the following recommendations.

One, have lifeguards certified in Red Cross lifeguarding, first aid, CPR and AED on duty during all aquatic activities. This includes recreational swimming, swimming lessons and other aquatics lessons, competitive swim team

COMMITTEE

recognition and sufficiency identification, require plans of correction and impose appropriate penalties for noncompliance.

Additionally, I hope that this Committee succeeds in amending Title 10 of the Connecticut Statutes with a holistic new policy that, as much as humanly possible, protects swimmers in public pools from injury or the loss of life. Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you very much. Fred. Any questions? Hearing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

FRED BALICKI: You're welcome.

REP. DARGAN: Next presenter is Jim Krayeske.

JIM KRAYESKE: Representative Dargan and Members of the Public Safety Committee, my name is Jim Krayeske and I'm Chairman of the Connecticut Boxing Commission. I'm here to testify on HB 5277 AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS.

I understand the proposal is to allow professional mixed martial arts to be held in Connecticut by inserting MMA into the existing boxing statutes and regulations.

From an economic and consumer entertainment perspective, this makes a lot of sense.

The Boxing Commission does offer one important caution, however. One of the foundations of the boxing statutes is to protect the health and safety of the participants. This is done both on a professional and amateur basis for the sport of boxing.

If MMA is to become legal in Connecticut, it is critical that the amateur side of the sport is included. There is no logic to protect the

young amateur boxers in the various clubs and gyms across the state, but let the amateur MMA enthusiasts fight and spar unregulated.

Amateur boxing is highly regulated under the Department of Public Safety. We believe a lack of attention to this fast growing participation and interest in MMA at the amateur level could leave the state open to liability by turning a blind eye to what is deemed assaultive behavior under the current law.

Both sports offer a great outlet for a mostly at-risk youth for a positive after school experience that teaches important lessons such as discipline and commitment.

If we move ahead with MMA, it is vitally important that we consider the health and safety of the amateur participants as well as the professionals.

Thank you.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you very much. Any questions from Committee Members? Hearing none, thank you very much. The next presenter, is it George Bryce.

GEORGE BRYCE, JR.: Good afternoon, Representative Dargan, Vice-Chair, Members of the Committee. My name is Detective George Bryce, Jr., and I'm the President of the local Bethel Police Union and we're here to voice support for the Proposed Bill 5540 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ARREST POWERS OF SWORN MEMBERS OF LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS.

Connecticut General Statute 54-1f predates the year 1950 and its legislative history shows no significant changes in the law to deal with emerging issues facing the law enforcement community.

COMMITTEE

House Bill 5749 could have an adverse effect on insurance premiums in the state. The Insurance Service Office, ISO, the national organization that rates communities for fire and disaster exposure, rates each jurisdiction based upon their updated building codes. Depending on when a community is rated, keeping a code in effect for six years or more will negatively impact its rating.

Homes built with the most current and up-to-date codes have significant savings on energy usage. Research studies have shown that home builders save considerably on energy, negating arguments that newly developed codes unnecessarily increase the cost of construction.

The Building Codes Assistance Project has many reports on this and there's a website link in the testimony that shows if you want more information on that.

Again, the ICC respectfully requests that the Committee carefully consider the negative impact of House Bill 5748.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the bill and I'd be glad to answer any questions or provide additional information.

REP. DARGAN: Thank you, Roland. Are there any questions from Committee Members? Hearing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

The next presenter is J. R. Romano.

J. R. ROMANO: Hello. I want to thank the Committee for their dedication and service. I know you guys are taking up a lot of bills today.

HB 5277
HB 5278

I originally came to voice my, I guess, approval of House Bill 6015. The mere fact

that a municipality who's struggling to deal with their financial concerns would look at 9-1-1 as a resource for revenue is just, it's disturbing.

The City of New Britain has a big budget shortfall and they are trying to think of creative ways to generate revenue and it's going to come at the backs of citizens who least can afford it.

Connecticut already pays the highest overall tax in the country in terms of sales tax, gas tax, income tax and all the other taxes we face. This would just be another, I guess, revenue drain for the average individual and I just think that it's appalling that New Britain would do this and I applaud the State Legislature for taking this on and I hope that you support the bill.

Secondly, in hearing the other testimony in regard to the MMA and some of the other testimony today about violence, I find it kind of interesting that the unions are sitting here in opposition to violence when there's hours of footage of union violence to my organization, which is Americans For Prosperity, with box cutters and assaults and no condemnation there.

HB 5277

But in terms of a legitimate, regulated sport they have some type of opposition on a union grudge. So as I fight for Right to Work in Connecticut, I hope the Committee will remember their opposition to violence.

And thirdly, originally growing up in Derby, Connecticut, I am very familiar with those firehouses and what they do. They do a wonderful job. Whatever those guys want, I would give it to them. I actually grew up with the family that benefitted from the trip to Philadelphia and their daughter's fine.

HB 5278

P11 L14

UNITEHERE! at YALE**LOCAL
35**425 College St.
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 865-3259**Testimony of Melissa Mason, Legislative Liaison, on Behalf of Robert Proto, International
Vice-President
UNITE HERE!
Public Safety and Security Committee
February 7, 2013**

Senator Hartley and Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, my name is Melissa Mason and I am a Legislative Liaison for UNITE HERE! located at 425 College Street in New Haven. I reside at 180 Fountain Street in New Haven.

I am here to testify on behalf of Robert Proto, International Vice-President of UNITE-HERE, in opposition to House Bill Number 5277 (An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts).

In the wake of the tragic mass shooting in Newtown, it is unthinkable that lawmakers in any jurisdiction would risk exposing our children to an activity that involves extreme violence and brutality.

Cage fighting, also known as "ultimate fighting" and "mixed martial arts," is sensationalized violence that has no place in civilized society. In these contests, fighters are allowed to *knock each other unconscious through elbows, kicks and knees to the head*¹; and to *strangle each other to the point of passing out through choke holds*². At least four cage fighters from the United States are reported to have died from injuries sustained during amateur or professional cage fights.³

We are also deeply concerned that cage fighters have competed in public stadiums and on television bearing Neo-Nazi messages in tattoos and on clothing.⁴

As recently as March 2012, a convicted sex offender with Neo-Nazi tattoos was allowed to compete in a nationally televised cage fighting event in Columbus, Ohio.⁵ In addition, an amateur cage fighter and white supremacist from Oregon last year allegedly went on a 10-day crime spree that spanned three states and included four murders. The fighter was charged with "targeting Jewish leaders, members of prominent Jewish organizations and other 'Zionists,' and using the media to publicize their movement in an attempt to spark a revolution."⁶

The Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights group, has warned of a disturbing connection between white supremacists and cage fighting. The Center wrote in a report:

"Not surprisingly, this rapidly rising blood sport is likewise wildly popular among racist skinheads and other young extremists with a thirst for violence."⁷

UNITEHERE! at YALE

LOCAL
35

425 College St.
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 865-3259

Professional cage fighting organizations, such as the UFC, have thus far failed to adequately police the behavior of fighters. Prominent UFC fighters have joked about rape in public, and have made remarks that are demeaning towards women, gays and Latinos.

UFC fighter Quinton "Rampage" Jackson appeared in a disgusting online video in which he makes light of sexual assault by pretending to attempt to rape a woman in a parking garage using chloroform and zip ties.⁸ Even after a coalition of women's groups, clergy and academics expressed outrage over Jackson's behavior, and called for his removal from a cage fighting event in Chicago, the UFC allowed him to compete on national television.⁹

One prominent UFC fighter wrote on Twitter, "Rape is the new missionary,"¹⁰ while another UFC fighter wrote, "If a rape van was called a surprise van, more women wouldn't mind going for rides in them."¹¹ UFC president Dana White has set a despicable example by repeatedly using abusive language that is derogatory to women.¹²

These public displays of violence, hate and misogyny are all the more troubling in light of the fact that cage fighting is being actively marketed to children through toys, video games and clothing. Today, children as young as seven years old are participating in cage fighting tournaments and training in UFC gyms¹³. There are online videos showing children punching and kicking each other from behind chain-link fences, while adult spectators clap and cheer.¹⁴

Last year, the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence wrote in a letter to New York state legislators opposing legalization of MMA in that state. The letter states that:

*"Children, in particular, should not be exposed to homophobic, misogynistic and violent language that has been permitted by the UFC. ... This kind of hateful rhetoric is not acceptable in America, where we are teaching our children to respect those who are different and where we are working to stop bullying in our schools and communities."*¹

Why, in a state that just suffered the second-deadliest school shooting in history, would we even consider exposing our children to the violent misogyny and perverse forms of masculinity that are celebrated in the world of cage fighting?

We strongly urge you to protect our children from these violent spectacles and maintain the ban against cage fighting in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and attention.

¹ NCDSV letter: http://www.ncdsv.org/images/NCDSV_NY_State_Assembly_Members_1-10-2012.pdf

UNITEHERE! at YALE

LOCAL
35

425 College St.
New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 865-3259

¹ UFC.com: <http://www.ufc.com/discover/fighter/skills/striking>

² UFC.com, "Ways To Win," <http://www.ufc.com/discover/sport/ways-to-win>; "YouTube video, "MMA Fighter Choked Unconscious, Ring Fever Exclusive," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CwDXuw4Mc4>; YouTube video, "Dustin Duffy Choked Unconscious in First Fight," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htYxtdkerk>; YouTube video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHSY2PQ6ywo>; YouTube video, "Stranglehold – The Sickest MMA Chokes of All Time," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aOw22ft1Y>

³ Budllong, Jeff, "Sturgis man dies after MMA fight in Rapid City," May 30, 2012, *Rapid City Journal*, http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/communities/sturgis/sturgis-man-dies-after-mma-fight-in-rapid-city/article_d6bfb780-3c13-5482-84bf-7926f686772d.html; Lengerich, Ryan, "Fighter died from blunt force trauma, autopsy reveals," July 12, 2012, *Rapid City Journal*, http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/fighter-died-from-blunt-force-trauma-autopsy-reveals/article_1fb84d49-0ca8-51d7-a269-eb771a8b48be.html; Daily, Karen, "Autopsy confirms MMA fighter died from head injury in bout," June 29, 2010, *Aiken Standard*, <http://www.aikenstandard.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100629/AIK0101/306299982>; Botter, Jeremy, "Cause of death determined in case of Houston fighter Vasquez," April 7, 2008, *Houston Chronicle*, <http://blog.chron.com/fighting/2008/04/cause-of-death-determined-in-case-of-houston-fighter-vasquez/>; Sievert, Steve, "Mixed martial arts has 1st death with Houstonian," Dec. 3, 2007, *Houston Chronicle*, <http://www.chron.com/sports/article/Mixed-martial-arts-has-1st-death-with-Houstonian-1800986.php>; Botter, Jeremy, "Cause of death determined in case of Houston fighter Vasquez," April 7, 2008, *Houston Chronicle*, <http://blog.chron.com/fighting/2008/04/cause-of-death-determined-in-case-of-houston-fighter-vasquez/>; Associated Press, "American Dies in Ukraine During 'Ultimate Fighting,'" March 19, 1998, *Buffalo News*, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-23029500.html>; Associated Press News Archive, "Man Dies After Ultimate Fight Match," March 19, 1998, <http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1998/Man-Dies-After-Ultimate-Fight-Match/id-abf4c3279aa3852fc64b934a40790862>

⁸ "Rampage Jackson — How to Pick Up a Gurl — Fast," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfG5amLtWEQ>

⁹ Hirst, Ellen Jean, "Video sparks protest of Ultimate Fighting event," Jan. 25, 2013, *Chicago Tribune*, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-01-25/news/ct-met-ufc-rape-video-20130125_1_ufc-fighter-lorenzo-fertitta-quinton-rampage-jackson; NBC 5 Chicago, "Groups Want UFC Star Booted for Racy Videos," Jan. 26, 2013, <http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/sports/ufc-chicago-quinton-rampage-jackson-rape-video-188462661.html>; Hill, Darlene, "Women's groups protest UFC's Quinton 'Rampage' Jackson," Jan. 25, 2013, *FOX 32 Chicago*, <http://www.myfoxchicago.com/story/20711189/womens-groups-protest-quinton-rampage-jackson>

¹⁰ Associated Press, "Group Criticizes UFC After Fighter's Rape Tweet," Nov. 12, 2012, CBS-Las Vegas, <http://lasvegas.cbslocal.com/2011/11/12/group-criticizes-ufc-after-fighters-rape-tweet/>

¹¹ McNeil, Franklin, "UFC fires Miguel Torres for tweet," Dec. 9, 2011, *ESPN.com*, http://espn.go.com/mma/story/_/id/7334939/ufc-releases-miguel-torres-rape-van-twitter-post

¹² Video (1:55 to 2:00), "UFC President Dana White's Notorious Rant," April 3, 2009, <http://www.blinkx.com/watch-video/ufc-president-dana-white-notorious-rant/FYZcYppmYJ5wwYruuKpvpw>; YouTube video (3:51 to 4:06), <http://www.youtube.com/embed/0Q8BeT77tVQ>

¹³ Keown, Tim, "The kid gloves come on," Dec. 25, 2012, *ESPN The Magazine*, http://espn.go.com/mma/story/_/id/8766646/future-mma-kids-crazy-rayfield-espn-magazine

¹⁴ Ibid.

P19 L19



Connecticut Boxing Commission



February 7, 2013

HB5277 (Mixed Martial Arts)
Public Safety & Security Committee

Sen. Hartley, Rep. Dargan and members of the Public Safety Committee, my name is Jim Krayeske. I am chairman of the Connecticut Boxing Commission.

I am here to testify on HB5277, An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts. I understand the proposal is to allow professional mixed martial arts events to be held in Connecticut by inserting MMA into existing boxing statutes and regulations.

From an economic and consumer entertainment perspective, this makes a lot of sense.

The boxing commission does offer one important caution however. One of the foundations of the boxing statutes is to protect the health and safety of the participants. This is done on both a professional and amateur basis for the sport of boxing.

If MMA is to become legal in Connecticut, it is critical that the amateur side of the sport is included. There is no logic to protect young amateur boxers in the various clubs and gyms across the state, but let amateur MMA enthusiasts spar and fight unregulated.

Amateur boxing is a highly regulated activity under the Department of Public Safety. We believe a lack of attention to the fast growing participation and interest in MMA at the amateur level could leave the state open to liability by turning a blind eye to what is deemed assaultive behavior under current law.

Both sports offer a great outlet for mostly at-risk youths for a positive after school experience that teaches important lesson such as discipline and commitment.

If we move ahead with MMA, it is vitally important to consider the health and safety needs of the amateur participants as well as professionals.

Jim Krayeske
Watertown, CT
CT Boxing Commission

P15 L20

Testimony in Support of
Proposed Bill 5277:
An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts
Charles J. Dowd, Jr
VP/Operations-Webster Bank Arena, Bridgeport, CT

*Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, thank you for your time and consideration of this proposed bill. The legalization of MMA in the state of CT is something that we at Webster Bank Arena and the City of Bridgeport feel strongly about as do many others throughout the state including building operators, employees of the venues, local merchants and fans of the sport.

*MMA is one of the fastest growing sports in the world, being practiced professionally in over 100 countries. The various entities that present the sport are well run, highly regulated, professional organizations who welcome oversight by various state organizations as a means of ensuring quality programming for its fans and most importantly, safety for its participants.

*MMA is protective of its combatants. It has shown to be proactive in ensuring that it remains one of, if not the safest combat sport. Recent studies (including research performed at Johns Hopkins University) have shown that MMA has significantly less head injuries than boxing (which is legal in the state of CT).

*MMA is legal in 48 states (NY and CT are the only holdouts) and is available on a daily basis through a variety of television contracts; cable and network relationships that have grown this sport dramatically. Furthermore, MMA events have been held at the CT casinos.

*MMA is quality programming for buildings such as ours and fans ask on a regular basis as to when we will present the product.

*The economic impact that MMA shows bring cannot be understated. The purpose of the state's investment in Webster Bank Arena is to serve as an economic driver to the downtown area. MMA is a case study in the positive economic impact that a venue such as Webster Bank Arena can be to Bridgeport. When we present quality programming such as our concert schedule or the upcoming NCAA Women's Regional, downtown Bridgeport is packed with visitors, many of whom walk away raving out the dining and entertainment options that Bridgeport has to offer.

*The measurable financial impact of an MMA show is dramatic. (See attached) During challenging economic times, the state of CT would realize over \$150,000 per show based upon ticket tax revenues and supplemental ticket tax revenues. Wages in excess of \$300,000 per event and the accompanying payroll taxes are significant. Over 250 people (many of whom are union members) will be working on an MMA show date.

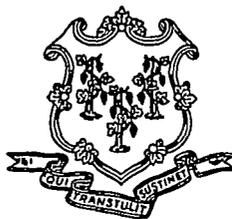
Furthermore, the state owned parking garages adjacent to the Webster Bank Arena will generate approximately \$12,000 net to the state for a single MMA event.

*Every MMA event that is held in neighboring states is a drain on the CT economy. The per capita spending of the MMA fan is significant and by not bringing this sport to our state, we are allowing monies that are desperately needed in our state to go elsewhere.

*Thank you very much for your time and interest. I am happy to answer any questions that you might have now or at your convenience. I've included my contact information on the handout sheet that you received.

Charlie Dowd
203-345-4809 (office)
203-395-0942 (cell)
Charlie.dowd@harboryardse.com

P17 L6



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 STATE CAPITOL
 HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MARY M. MUSHINSKY
 EIGHTY-FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
 ROOM 4038
 HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
 HOME (203) 269-8378
 CAPITOL (800) 240-8500
 TOLL FREE 1-800-842-8267
 E-mail Mary.Mushinsky@cga.ct.gov

CO-CHAIR
 PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
 ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
 FINANCE REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

**Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85th) in Support of HB 5277, An Act
 Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts**

**Before the Public Safety and Security Committee
 Thursday, February 7, 2013 11:00 a.m. in Room 1E**

I am a cosponsor of this bill which would permit professional mixed martial arts matches to be held in the state and to subject such matches to the same regulation that currently applies to boxing matches. The Commissioner of Public Safety would be the most appropriate regulatory authority over such matches, requiring the registration of hosts of such matches, licensing to conduct such matches, imposing a tax upon the receipts of such matches to make the regulatory system revenue neutral and to impose other safety requirements, as necessary. This bill was requested by a constituent who pointed out that Connecticut has already authorized boxing and he would like to see his sport, mixed martial arts, be given the same state-sanctioned status and meet statewide standards. The sport has fans and instructors in Wallingford. Thank you for consideration of our request.

P17 L10



P.O. Box 26959 • Las Vegas, Nevada • 89126-0959 • phone 702-221-4780 • fax 702-367 6373

February 6, 2013

Connecticut General Assembly
Public Safety and Security Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3600
Hartford, CT 06106

**RE: Prepared Testimony in Support of HB 5277
An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts**

Honorable Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the rapidly growing sport of mixed martial arts. I would especially like to thank Co-Chairs Senator Hartley and Representative Dargan, Vice Chairs Ayala and Verrengia and Ranking Members Guglielmo and Giegler for allowing me to participate in the hearing today.

By way of some background, my name is Michael P. Mersch. I am the Senior Vice President of Business & Legal Affairs and Assistant General Counsel for Zuffa, LLC ("Zuffa") dba Ultimate Fighting Championship® (the "UFC"). Prior to joining the UFC approximately 6 years ago, I was Chief Legal Counsel for the Nevada Athletic Commission for 7 years. I have appeared before several legislative committees across the country and internationally and have met with representatives from many states to inform, educate and answer questions related to the sport of mixed martial arts and oversight and regulation thereof.

WHAT IS MIXED MARTIAL ARTS?

Mixed martial arts ("MMA") is an exciting, intense and evolving unarmed combat sport in which competitors use interdisciplinary forms of various martial arts, include jiu-jitsu, judo, karate, boxing, kickboxing, wrestling and others, to their strategic and tactical advantage in a supervised match governed by strict rules and regulations to ensure the protection of the participants. Scoring for mixed martial arts events is based on athletic-commission approved definitions and rules for striking (with the hands, feet, knees or elbows) and grappling (submissions, wrestling, throws or takedowns).

WHAT IS "ULTIMATE FIGHTING"?

Ultimate Fighting® is a proprietary term and registered trademark owned by Zuffa. It is mixed martial arts competition between elite level professional fighters who utilize the disciplines of jiu-jitsu, karate, boxing, kickboxing, wrestling, and other forms in UFC promoted events. UFC competitors are among the best-trained and conditioned athletes in the world. Safety is of paramount concern to the UFC's ownership and management. **It is noteworthy that no competitor has ever been seriously injured in a UFC event.**



P.O. Box 26959 • Las Vegas, Nevada • 89126-0959 • phone 702-221-4780 • fax 702-367-6373

HISTORY OF THE UFC®

Started in 1993, the Ultimate Fighting Championship® brand is entering into its 20th year of operation as a professional mixed martial arts promotional organization offering the premier series of MMA sports events. The UFC organization follows a rich history and tradition of competitive MMA dating back to the Olympic Games in Athens dating from 648 BC and the sport of Pankration.

About 90 years ago, a Brazilian form of MMA known as Vale Tudo (which translates to "anything goes") sparked local interest in the sport. Then, the UFC organization brought MMA to the United States. When it first began, the goal was to find "the Ultimate Fighting Champion" with a concept to have a tournament of the best skilled athletes from the various disciplines of all martial arts, including karate, jiu-jitsu, boxing, kickboxing, grappling, wrestling, sumo and other combat sports. The winner of the tournament would be crowned the champion.

In January 2001, under the new ownership of Zuffa, the UFC brand completely restructured itself and began to work with various states to change MMA into a highly organized and controlled sport. As a result, the UFC now offers approximately 12-14 live pay-per-view events and 20-25 live television events annually through network, cable, satellite, mobile and Internet providers. UFC® programming is broadcast in approximately 148 countries and territories reaching 800 million homes worldwide in 20 different languages. In Connecticut, the UFC can be watched on pay-per-view, Fox Broadcast Network, FX Network and FUEL TV.

Ancillary businesses now include UFC.com with over 6 million unique visitors per month, the best-selling UFC "Undisputed" videogame franchise distributed by THQ and our new videogame franchise soon to be released by EA Sports, UFC Gym™, UFC Fight Club affinity program, UFC Fan Expo™ festivals, branded apparel, trading cards, articulated action figures and other media including best-selling DVDs and a U.S. bi-monthly magazine.

REGULATION REQUIRED FOR SAFETY AND INTEGRITY OF SPORT

The UFC organization has always embraced the motto of running towards regulation rather than away from it. In 2001, the UFC was purchased by Zuffa with an express goal to do what the previous owners had not – fully embrace regulation in every state. Our primary goal was and is cooperation with, and operation under, the guidelines of State Athletic Commissions in an effort to establish mixed martial arts as a legitimate and sanctioned sport and to develop the full set of rules necessary to make the sport legal and fighter safety the paramount concern.

In early 2001, the New Jersey State Athletic Control Board, along with representatives from the Nevada and California Commissions and other interested parties, including promoters, participants and officials, met to develop the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts. These rules govern the conduct of participants while engaging in the sport. Those rules are the basis for



P.O. Box 26959 • Las Vegas, Nevada • 89126-0959 • phone 702-221-4780 • fax 702-367-6373

regulation in each of the jurisdictions that have taken the necessary steps to properly regulate this sport.

The UFC strives for the highest levels of safety and quality in all aspects of the sport and has always believed this was best done under the auspices of proper regulation. The UFC firmly believes in adherence to all required medical testing and typically goes well beyond the requirements of certain states to ensure the health and safety of the participants.

Today, mixed martial arts is regulated and recognized by many of the world's most prestigious sports regulatory bodies including the Nevada, New Jersey, California, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Massachusetts State Athletic Commissions and we hope that Connecticut will see fit to properly regulate the sport as well. In all, MMA is legal and thriving in 48 states across the country. Further, 45 states, the District of Columbia, many Tribal Lands such as the Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods, and the majority of the provinces of Canada have passed legislation and/or regulations to properly regulate the sport of mixed martial arts. The time has come for Connecticut to join that list.

OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FOR MMA LEGISLATION IN 2012

During the 2012 legislative session, the language of the legislation before this Committee had tremendous support. The bill last year (SB 326) passed the Public Safety and Security Committee 21-2; passed the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee 46-4; and passed the General Law Committee 13-1. There was overwhelming support for the bill in the Senate; however, SB 326 was not called to a vote and died on the Senate Calendar.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT FOR CONNECTICUT

MMA events would provide direct, indirect and ancillary economic benefits to the state. The state would derive revenue from the tax on tickets to the events. Restaurants, hotels and parking would also be positively impacted by MMA fans attending events. Additionally, at arenas such as the XL Center in Hartford, and the Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport, additional high paying mostly union jobs would be created.

MMA is available to the residents of the State of Connecticut right now through network and cable television and pay-per-view distribution in their homes, via the internet and their mobile devices, at the local restaurants and taverns they patronize and by driving to neighboring jurisdictions and at the Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods Casinos to attend events live in person. What the State of Connecticut is missing, however, is the opportunity to derive the economic benefit from holding safe and properly regulated live events at venues around the state.



P.O. Box 26959 • Las Vegas, Nevada • 89126 0959 • phone 702-221-4780 • fax 702-367-6373

CONCLUSION

Once again, thank your for your consideration of this important legislation and for allowing me to testify before this Committee. We would respectfully urge the Committee to pass the legislation that is pending before it concerning mixed martial arts. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have and to discuss other more specific issues related to the sport including the safety of the competitions, the dedication and skill level of the athletes and the potential economic impact mixed martial arts may provide.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Mersch

P19 L1

Prepared Testimony of Glover Teixeira

In Support of HB 5277 – An Act to Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts

To: The Honorable Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Public Safety and Security Committee

My name is Glover Teixeira and I am a resident of Danbury, CT. Although I was born in Brazil, I have lived here since 1999. Thank you for allowing me to speak before you today on a subject which is very important to me personally.

By way of some background, I am a professional mixed martial artist and I currently fight for the Ultimate Fighting Championship® (the "UFC"). My professional record is 20-2. I am undefeated in the UFC, have won my last 18 fights in a row and am currently ranked as one of the Top 10 Light Heavyweight mixed martial artists in the world. It is my goal to become the UFC Light Heavyweight Champion of the World. And I appear before you today in support of HB 5277.

I grew up watching the early legends of the sport of MMA, like Royce Gracie and Chuck Liddell, and from the time I was young and I knew that I wanted to become a professional mixed martial artist when I grew up. After many years of training, I earned a black belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, an individual martial art, which I began training in when I was younger. I began training in mixed martial arts ("MMA") and had my first professional bout in 2002...Fighting professionally and training to be successful at MMA is what I do. It is my career. It is how I earn a living and how I support my family.

I have been privileged to work with some of the greatest athletes, trainers and coaches the sport has known. Through my many years of training, I have learned a great deal and MMA has taught me discipline, respect, perseverance, self assurance and the importance of being dedicated and hard working. I am lucky to be able to be a part of this sport that I have great respect for.

During my career I've fought in many states such as California, Oregon and Illinois, and in my native country of Brazil; however, I cannot participate and earn a living here in my home state of Connecticut. Just 12 days ago I competed in a UFC event in Chicago, IL at the United Center where I was the co-main event. The event was attended by over 16,000 fans and brought in a live gate of \$1.3 million dollars. Further, the event averaged more the 4.2 million total views and was the #1 program of the night on both broadcast and cable television.

Having been in Connecticut since 1999, I can tell you that MMA is a very popular sport in here as it is all over the world. Ironically, I can sit in my living room in Danbury and watch MMA on television. I can buy it on pay-per-view. I can watch it in restaurants and bars across Connecticut. I can go to mixed martial arts gyms throughout the state and train to compete in MMA. And I can attend live events nearby states and at the Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods Casinos. But I cannot participate in a supervised and regulated live event here in Connecticut.

In conclusion, I would just add that I would love to have the opportunity to participate in an event someday here in my home state of Connecticut. Thank you again for your time and I would again respectfully request you vote to pass HB 5277.

Glover Teixeira

16 Cozy Hollow Road

Danbury, CT 06811



BILL FINCH
Mayor

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT
999 BROAD STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 06604
TELEPHONE (203) 576-7201
FAX (203) 576-3913

TESTIMONY OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
TO THE
PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 7, 2013

RE: H.B. 5277 AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5277.

In an era of shrinking revenue and stagnant economic growth, the State of Connecticut can no longer afford to ignore the profitability Mixed Martial Arts will bring to the state and a locality. Each Mixed Martial Arts event that takes place at Webster Bank Arena will generate approximately \$30,000 in wages for International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (I.A.T.S.E), \$12,250 for police overtime and \$1,500 fire personnel (attached, I have provided data that shows the overall value of one event to the state and employees). This figure doesn't take into account significant uptick in revenues for our local businesses on the dates of events at Webster Arena. For events such as concerts and special events, it is virtually impossible to secure a table at one of our downtown restaurants without a reservation, well in advance. The traffic from this event will go a long way in assisting us in marketing our city and provides many people the opportunity to learn about our various attractions.

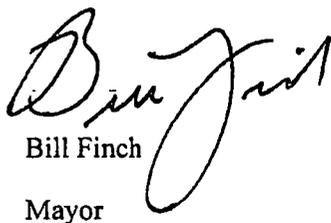
While objections to the Mixed Martial Arts have been raised due to the violent nature of the sport, I don't believe that this issue alone should prohibit the legalization of the sport in

Connecticut. Football and boxing also have well documented histories of injuries as a result of the sport, yet both are legal in the State of Connecticut. Steps have been taken in MMA to ensure the safety of participants before and during the events.

Mixed Martial Art is practiced in over a 100 countries and Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) is one of the fastest growing sports businesses in the world. This sport is legal in 48 states, except for Connecticut and New York, and it's available on a daily basis via national television contracts on both cable and broadcast television. In short, Mixed Martial Arts is a worldwide phenomenon and it's time for us to catch up.

I thank you for addressing this issue and for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony on this proposal.

Sincere Regards,



Bill Finch
Mayor



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MATT RITTER
1ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4003
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

HOME. 860-519-5685
CAPITOL (860) 240-8585
E-MAIL Matthew.Ritter@cga.ct.gov

VICE CHAIRMAN
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

MEMBER
BANKS COMMITTEE
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Testimony before the Public Safety and Security Committee
Thursday, February 7th
11:00 AM
Room 1E Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: HB 5277, An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, my name is Representative Matt Ritter from the First District serving Hartford.

I am testifying in support of Re: HB 5277, An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts. This bill legalizes mixed martial arts, and essentially subjects the sport to the same stringent laws governing boxing. The bill also requires additional regulation of the sport by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to ensure uniformity and safety.

The passage of this bill will bring revenues to the state and to the municipalities that host the sport. In addition to the licensing and registration fees, the bill imposes a 5% tax on promoters from the gross receipts on ticket sales of each martial arts match. That tax must be paid into the State's General Fund.

This bill is important to our large cities as well, putting Hartford and Bridgeport in a unique position to have additional revenues that will be derived from the

opportunity to host these events in our larger capacity event arenas. The event will create jobs for workers in these facilities. In addition, there will be increased revenues to our restaurants, hotels, and parking facilities estimates which will be given to you by the facilities that hope to host these events.

Currently, 45 states have legalized and regulated mixed martial arts matches. Of the five remaining states, New York and Connecticut are the only two states that disallow the sport and truly remain unregulated. Alaska and Wyoming do not have Athletic or Boxing Commissions to regulate the sport. Vermont allows mixed martial arts matches without regulation. Additionally, the District of Columbia, Tribal Lands such as the Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods, and the majority of the Canadian Provinces have now passed legislation and regulations to properly regulate the sport of mixed martial arts.

As a final note, the enactment of this bill will ensure safety in a sport that is being conducted now in this state with no regulation. It is important that our state sets the proper standards for safety and not allow matches to go unregulated. This includes the selection of qualified and properly trained officials, as well as the medical and drug testing requirements.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify and respectfully request passage of HB 5277.



Plus One Defense Systems
www.teamplusone.com
860-922-5343

02/06/2013

Connecticut General Assembly
Public Safety and Security Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3600
Hartford, CT 06106

**RE: Prepared Testimony in Support of HB 5277
An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts**

Honorable Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to you to discuss HB 5277, An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts. I would especially like to thank Co-Chairs Senator Hartley and Representative Dargan, Vice Chairs Ayala and Verrengia and Ranking Members Guglielmo and Giegler for their interest in this important piece of legislation.

By way of some background, my name is Darin Reisler. I own and operate Plus One Defense Systems, Inc. in West Hartford, Connecticut. I am a former police officer and have also worked as the Executive Director of the Community Anti-Drug Coalition of Hampden County. I have been involved as a member on the steering committee for the Partners In Prevention, a group initiated by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association; I was the faculty advisor for Tunxis Community College's Christian Club, I have held the position of Vice-President with MADD Massachusetts (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), and I am a former member of the Hampden County District Attorney's Task Force On Domestic Violence. I am also a licensed and experienced social worker.

Why do I think Connecticut needs to legalize and regulate the growing sport of mixed martial arts? The sport is growing and is very important for children and adults.

I have seen first-hand how the training that young people get from this sport helps them with discipline, self-esteem, and positive self-awareness. In fact, my school currently receives referrals from the Department of Children and Families. We have received a number of referrals via the Department when their social workers believe that our services can help at-risk young people. Why does this occur? This occurs because our programming is proven to build stronger character in young people. I do mean proven. I have had some of our programming independently evaluated by the UMASS Donahue Institute, and we have a proven record of aiding in child development and building character traits such as respect, responsibility, and kindness. After ten years of service in Connecticut (eight of them in West Hartford) we are continually referred students by non-profit organizations, physicians, and therapists. I have seen how this sport is a benefit to the community as a whole.

My adult students include many people from all walks of life. We have police officers, lawyers, doctors, insurance agents, accountants, computer programmers, construction workers, and government employees, amongst others who come to us for training. We provide these students with a very fun way of becoming healthier, happier, and safer.

We hold community events, and we donate 10% of all of our profits back to our local and global community. The legalization of this sport will bring needed revenue to the state, and regulation will ensure that safety is exercised when there are any sanctioned matches that are held. As of now, we need to go out-of-state in order to pursue sanctioned competition. This is taking a lot of money away from our State and local businesses.

Counting myself, we now support three full-time staff members and 10 part-time staff members. Full-time staff at my school have medical and dental benefits available, as well as paid sick days and two weeks paid vacation each year. One of my full-time staff members is a Dartmouth graduate, the other is a Navy veteran.

We started with one student on an outdoor basketball court, and we now have approximately 400 members. We are growing. Should you decide to pass this bill, we would be empowered to bring about a greater level of the programming to Connecticut than we already provide. We would bring new jobs to Connecticut, and we would be better able to help Connecticut residents live healthier, happier, safer lives. We would be better able to provide services to the children of Connecticut. We would be better able to help build tomorrow's generation of Connecticut residents with a mentality of social responsibility, kindness, and understanding.

I urge you to pass HB 5277. Thank you for your consideration.

With Peace,
Darin

Darin Reisler
Owner/Head Instructor
Plus One Defense Systems

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 5277, AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MMA

February 7, 2013

My name is Andrew Calandrelli, I am currently the owner of Ultimate MMA Training Center in North Haven, CT. I will be opening another satellite school in Branford, CT in the very near future. I have been a long time student and competitor of Mixed Martial Arts. This sport has changed my life for the better, and, in turn, allows me to help change the lives of many young children, women and men.

As any Mixed Martial Artist will tell you, there are a wide variety of benefits which come along with training. The most obvious benefit within the arts is gaining the knowledge of self-defense, the major reason why the art was developed in the first place. Knowing how to defend oneself and other individuals in a potentially dangerous situation is an asset in today's world just as it was years ago. Unlike often portrayed in the movies, Martial Arts training are not just about fighting. Many people take up Mixed Martial Arts for the fitness benefits as well. Training in several different styles (Jiu-Jitsu, Muay Thai, Wrestling and Boxing) allows one to improve cardiovascular fitness levels, as well as tone the body.

Mixed Martial Arts is different from other sports. Mixed Martial Arts combines a mental and sometimes spiritual element which not only improves the mind's focus but also helps in self-control. Through training, emotions such as anger and fear are better controlled, as well as allowing confidence to be boosted. Many martial artists find an inner peace through their training transforming these benefits into one of the most effective stress management tools available in today's society. Regardless of training one on one, in a session, or in a group, it allows the stress of the day to be diminished, and one to feel restored and energized.

Training in Mixed Martial Arts allows for constant self-growth. As the martial artist grows, the feeling of accomplishments provides increasing confidence. This is especially beneficial for our youth who are in need of a push in the right direction. An increase in self-confidence for kids will have a cross over effect in other areas of life, such as, performance in school, other sports and general self-esteem. Having that confidence allows one to strive in a way he or she may never have imagined.

A huge part of our teaching martial arts allows us to educate the parents on how their children will become more disciplined from the unique practice. This is one area that is often lacking in other sports. Former "troubled" kids with bad attitudes could become well behaved and respectful as a result of taking classes. Respect and Responsibility is something that all instructors place great importance in during their classes. Our Mixed Martial Arts kids are often well behaved children no matter what social economic backgrounds they come from. We instill a sense of community and family at our gym. It is a safe place for all ages to learn and grow.

Mixed Martial Arts training has so many great benefits covering physical, mental and emotional aspects, that it's no wonder why it has become one of the most popular activities for both adults and children.

Passage of this legislation will bring benefits to many businesses and revenues to the state. And, most importantly, regulation will ensure safety for the participants. CT should endorse what 48 states have already done by regulating the sport of Mixed Martial Arts. In conclusion, I urge to you vote favorably for House Bill No. 5277.



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE SEAN WILLIAMS
SIXTY-EIGHTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING ROOM 4200
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

(800) 842-1423
FAX: (860) 240-0207
Sean.Williams@housegop.ct.gov

ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN LEADER

RANKING MEMBER
FINANCE REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

MEMBER
ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

Public Safety and Security Committee
Public Testimony
Thursday, February 7, 2013

Dear Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan, Senator Andres, Representative Verrengia, Senator Guglielmo, Representative Giegler, and Public Safety and Security Committee Members,

I submit this testimony in support of HB 5277, AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS.

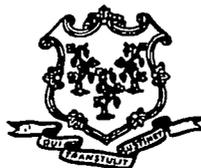
This bill legalizes and regulates the sport of mixed martial arts within the State of Connecticut. This bill requires those participating in mixed martial arts to adhere to stringent laws and regulations.

In addition to ensuring competitor's safety, this bill will create a revenue source for the state. Along with the licensing and registration fees, the bill imposes a 5% tax on the gross receipts of ticket sales. The funds collected through the tax will go into the State's General Fund. It is estimated that an event held at the XL Center in Hartford could result in up to \$350,000 in revenue for the state, as well as spinoff revenue for the municipality.

So far 48 states have legalized mixed martial arts; New York and Connecticut are the only two that disallow the sport. I encourage the Committee to support HB 5277.

Sincerely,

Sean Williams
State Representative
68th District



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 STATE CAPITOL
 HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MATTHEW LESSER
 ONE HUNDREDTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
 ROOM 4014
 HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

HOME. 860-344-1230
 CAPITOL. 860-240-8585
 TOLL FREE. 800-842-8267
 FAX: 860-240-0208
 E-MAIL: Matthew.Lesser@cga.ct.gov

VICE CHAIRMAN
 GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND
 ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
 EDUCATION COMMITTEE
 ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
 PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Testimony of
 Representative Matthew Lesser, 100th District
 February 7, 2013

In Support of HB 5277, An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts

Good afternoon Representative Dargan, Senator Hartley and Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee,

I want to thank the Committee for raising An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts again this session.

This bill will put mixed martial arts on an equal footing with boxing, allowing the thousands of MMA fans in Connecticut the opportunity to watch their past time without leaving the state. In addition, it will generate economic activity and should be revenue positive.

At a time of great fiscal uncertainty, this is a small step to help balance our state's budget.

This bill is very simple, it simply adds "mixed martial arts" to portions of the state statutes licensing and regulating boxing.

At the present time, Connecticut is one of only two states where mixed martial arts are not legal.

It is rare in this building, and particularly this year, for any industry to come before us asking us to tax them. Yet here we have a golden opportunity to allow businesses to operate in our state and add to our economy.

I thank the committee for its time and respectfully urge a favorable report.

Jonathan M. Sousa, Esq.
Superior Court, Legal Research
20 Park Street, Room 218
Rockville, CT 06066
Tel. (860) 870-3218
jonathan.sousa@jud.ct.gov

February 7, 2013

To Co-Chairs Senator Hartley and Representative Dargan, Vice Chairs Senator Ayala and Representative Verrengia, Ranking Members Senator Guglielmo and Representative Giegler, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee

I respectfully submit testimony today in favor of Proposed H.B. No. 5277 AN ACT
LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS.

Over the last twenty years, the sport of mixed martial arts has grown tremendously as a competitive sport and popular form of entertainment. Each year, thousands of eager participants at all skill levels take classes in various forms of martial arts training including Brazilian jiu-jitsu, muay thai, and kickboxing. Here in Connecticut, several mixed martial arts experts from abroad have opened facilities and instructed interested people of all ages on tactical self-defense techniques. While some may argue that it carries a violent stigma, many participants and spectators have come to appreciate mixed martial arts as a valuable professional sport.

Despite the risks involved, mixed martial arts is now highly regulated, much like any other professional sport. The legalization of professional mixed martial arts fighting will require licensing, medical requirements, and careful oversight. Those who partake in mixed martial arts and support the legalization of professional fighting events fully understand these requirements and will ensure their full implementation.

Permitting professional mixed martial arts in Connecticut will bring a significant amount of much needed tax revenue. Professional fights in other states often attract sell-out crowds of devoted spectators. It would be very beneficial to permit the state of Connecticut to join that group.

I urge the committee to vote favorably on this legislation. I thank the committee today for their time and consideration.

Regards,

Jonathan M. Sousa, Esq.

P15 L18

JAMES W. DONOHUE, ESQ.

1375 Trout Brook Drive • West Hartford, CT 06117
jwdonohue@gmail.com • (860) 299-5529

February 4, 2013

My name is James Donohue and I am here today to give testimony in support of House Bill, HB 5277 AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS. Ever since the first Mixed Martial Arts (aka MMA) bill was introduced several years ago I have been coming to the State House in an effort to educate legislators in regards to the benefits of legalizing and regulating the sport of MMA. Over the years I have found that participant safety and revenue generation are of particular importance.

First and foremost MMA is a combat sport. However, in regulating MMA the State would seek to provide a managed and safe environment in which the participants can gain valuable experience with limited exposure to danger. Through the licensing of properly trained referees, mandates for medical staff presence, equipment inspections, and fighter physicals, the State can ensure the safety of the fighters and enjoyment of the fans. Despite what some may describe as violence unchecked, the sport of MMA is as safe, if not safer than, boxing or other unarmed combat sports. The unified rules of MMA require the stoppage of fights where a fighter cannot *intelligently defend himself*. Instead of giving a downed fighter time to temporarily regain his wits, only to be struck again, the fight is immediately stopped when that fighter fails to adequately protect themselves. As well, a fight may be won with the use of a submission move wherein the opposing fighter may tap out, or quit with honor, before any damage is done and without a single strike landing.

Additionally, the legalization of MMA will allow events to take place throughout the state thereby creating direct revenue generation to the state from the licensing of fighters and team members, as well as, event taxes and fees. The greatest economic benefit will be seen by the local businesses that gain significant increases of customers in and around the time of the event. Event centers such as the XL center must hire additional staff to work the event and local hotels and restaurants see a boon to sales as out of town visitors require food and lodging. To be certain, large events promoted by the UFC would bring substantial one time revenue boosts, but it is the smaller and local promoter which will generate revenue year round for more rural businesses. In legalizing MMA the state opens a revenue stream previously untapped.

It should be understood by this body that the MMA community is seeking regulation by the State. It invites the reasonable restrictions that accompany such regulation and hopes only to foster a working relationship that is mutually beneficial. In passing this bill the State finds an additional revenue stream with minor initial cost to the taxpayer, and the MMA community gains the support commensurate with other combat sports.



CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

56 Town Line Road, Rocky Hill, CT 06067
860-571-6191 fax 860-571-6190

PL L17

Testimony of Lori Pelletier, Secretary -Treasurer
Connecticut AFLCIO before the
Public Safety and Security Committee
February 7, 2013

Senator Hartley and Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee my name is Lori Pelletier and I am the Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFLCIO representing 900 affiliated local unions who's members live in each and every city and town in our state.

I am here to testify in opposition to H.B. No. 5277 AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS. (PS).

We oppose this bill on two levels. First and we have discussed this with you before that the owners of MMA's Ultimate Fight Championship (UFC) are bad citizens when it comes to recognizing workers right to assemble freely. We appreciate the potential for events because our affiliates' members work in the venues where these take place. However, the people involved with the MMA world have created many problems for members of the Nevada AFLCIO and we cannot in good conscience condone there actions by supporting this bill. With nearly 80 Unfair Labor Practices, clearly these owners are not responsible partners.

Imagine if you we proposing a bill to regulate and allow hate speech, or physical assault. Well that's what you are doing. The world of MMA which may be exciting and entertaining to some, is demeaning to many. Women, and those in the LGBT community are often the brunt of slurs and comments used to further the competitive neater of these events.

In just the past few months the United States Marine Corp disaffiliated with the UFC because of their blatant disregard for human decency and respect. In today's world, violence, hate crimes and bullying are playing a huge role in the life of our youth and young adults. As a State we should not be condoning this type of entertainment. Let's stand up to both corporate bullying and bullying as a form of entertainment and tell those who push this to change their ways before we amend our statutes.

This general assembly will spend many hours looking at result of violence whether it's from video games, movies, or sports. Even institutions like the NFL, NHL, and major league soccer are working with their respective player unions to ensure the sport is safe for players and that there is a level of respect towards our communities. When an NFL player was asked about the idea of next year's super bowl being outside in a cold weather stadium he responded with hateful adjective. The NFL immediately responded and the player apologized.

UFC continues to remain silent to their "athletes" hateful comments and racial slurs. We have enough violence in our society, and we explore the committee to reject this form of hate for its entertainment value.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

PRESIDENT John W. Olsen	1st VICE PRESIDENT Sharon M. Palmer	VICE PRESIDENTS John Ahern John A. Altieri Linda Armstrong Richard Benham Karen Blanchard Tammie Botelho Beverly Brakeman Calvin Bunnell Wayne J. Burgess Michael Calderon	Peter Carroll Carol Censki Frank Cirillo Everett C. Corey Shellye Davis Kenneth DeLaCruz Alvin Douglas Steven R. Ferrucci III Ronald Frost Patrick Gaynor Bill Henderson	Kathleen S. Jackson Clarke King Thomas Ledoux John McCarthy Richard McCombs Ronald McLellan Jean Morningstar Warren Pepicelli Melodie Peters Michael Petosa Ronald Petronella	Robert Proto Peter Reilly Carmen Reyes David Roche Edward Sasso Patrena Smith Valerie Stewart Ray Soucy James R. Wallace, Jr. Paul Wallace Kurt Westby
SECRETARY-TREASURER Lori J. Pelletier	2nd VICE PRESIDENT Mark A. Espinosa				
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT Salvatore Luciano	3rd VICE PRESIDENT Benedict W. Cozzi				
GENERAL VICE PRESIDENT Thomas A. Wilkinson	4th VICE PRESIDENT Jeffrey H. Matchett				
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY					