

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Colonel Danny R. Stebbins  
Acting Commissioner

Lieutenant Edwin S. Henion  
Chief of Staff

February 22, 2011

Rep. Stephen Dargan, Co-Chairman  
Sen. Joan Hartley, Co-Chairman  
Public Safety and Security Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

### **HB 5269 AN ACT REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS MATCHES**

#### ***The Department of Public Safety opposes this bill.***

The Department of Public Safety does not have the requisite staff, expertise, or financial resources to adopt regulations and oversee mixed martial arts matches. Passage of this bill would have a significant fiscal and operational impact on the Department of Public Safety. In 2007, the Department of Public Safety was given responsibility and oversight for boxing matches in the state and received only one additional clerical position for the purpose of carrying out those duties. For the agency to meet this existing obligation it has been necessary to assign state troopers and department staff attorneys, taking them away from their normally assigned duties to oversee boxing events and promoters. If this bill were adopted considerable time and effort would be needed to develop regulations. This would result in delays in FOI requests, delays in development of required contracts and memoranda of understanding, and delayed payments to the Department of Public Safety by vendors. Additionally overtime expenses would be incurred by DPS employees required to oversee and monitor mixed martial events.

The agency's personal services account has already been subject to rescissions due to the state budget deficit. The Department of Public Safety has already had to divert resources in order to carry out the oversight of boxing matches in Connecticut.

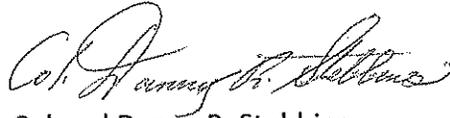
The Department of Public Safety also has concerns regarding this proposed bill because it seems incompatible with the agency's primary mission of preserving the public safety and well being of Connecticut citizens. Unlike boxing, which is defined by CGS 29-143j-1(d) as a contest "in the sport or skill of fighting with the fist", mixed martial art matches consist of full mutual combat endeavor. It allows an opponent to strike someone who is prone, who is rising from the ground, it permits the use of the knee or elbow, hitting with the inside of the hand, the butt of the hand, backhand blows, body strikes to the kidneys, rabbit punches,

kicks and leg strikes that would be considered fouls in a traditional boxing match. As result' a competitor is at a greater risk of receiving serious bodily injury. Should the Department of Public Safety be required to regulate such events and an injury does occur, it potentially exposes the state to liability for civil damages as the governmental authority regulating these matches.

As an agency whose primary mission is to protect life and ensure the safety of its citizens, it would appear duplicitous to require the Department of Public Safety to regulate and permit modern day gladiatorial events in Connecticut.

Based on fiscal impact and adverse impact on operations to the agency alone, however, this bill should not go forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Col. Danny R. Stebbins".

Colonel Danny R. Stebbins  
ACTING COMMISSIONER