



February 22, 2011

Connecticut General Assembly  
Public Safety and Security Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3600  
Hartford, CT 06106

Honorable Members of the Committee:

I would like to start by thanking Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety Committee for the opportunity to appear before you to testify in support of HB 5269, An Act Regulating Mixed Martial Arts Matches.

By way of some background, my name is Keith Sheldon. I am the Manager of Business Affairs and Bookings at the XL Center. The XL Center is Connecticut's premier sports and entertainment facility, hosting sporting events, exhibitions, concerts, and family entertainment. The XL Center is owned by the City of Hartford and managed by the Anschutz Entertainment Group ("AEG") through a sublease from the Connecticut Development Authority ("CDA").

Mixed martial arts ("MMA") is an extremely exciting sport with a tremendous following that is rapidly growing. As an employee of AEG, a company that owns and/or manages over 100 entertainment venues worldwide, I have been able to experience first hand the type of economic driver MMA can be. A high level MMA contest, such as those sponsored by the UFC, would bring a tremendous crowd to the XL Center and downtown Hartford. Accordingly, not only is business driven to local restaurants and hotels, but we at the XL Center would have to ramp up for operational and staffing needs, which ultimately means the manifestation of several hundred jobs.

Further, MMA events like those sponsored by the UFC, would bring an incredible amount of exposure both nationally and internally for the State through media coverage, television and pay-per-view exposure, and buzz on social media outlets. This sort of exposure would be extremely valuable to the entire State in terms of getting additional events of all types.

Finally, the safety of our event participants and fans is first and foremost at the XL Center. HB 5269 seeks to place MMA under the jurisdiction of the State Boxing Commission. This legislation would allow the Commissioner of Public Safety to adopt regulations to regulate the conduct, supervision and safety of MMA matches, including the licensing of sponsors and participants of such matches, and to set a reasonable fee for the issuance of licenses to sponsors, combatants and participants in mixed martial arts matches. We believe this is appropriate to ensure that the contests are fair and safe.

For the foregoing reasons, I urge the Public Safety Committee to vote in favor of HB 5269.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Keith Sheldon  
Manager, Business Affairs  
AEG / XL Center