P.O. Box 26959 • Las Vegas, Nevada • 89126-0959 • phone 702-221-4780 • fax 702-367-6373

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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 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 for allowing me to appear here today, in support of *Committee Bill No. 5269, An Act Regulating Mixed Martial Arts Matches.*

By way of some background, my name is Marc Ratner. I am the Vice President of Government & Regulatory Affairs for Zuffa, LLC ("Zuffa") dba Ultimate Fighting Championship® ("UFC"). Prior to joining the UFC almost 5 years ago, I was Executive Director for the Nevada Athletic Commission for 14 years. I have appeared before several legislative committees across the country and met with representatives from many States to inform, educate and answer questions related to the sport of mixed martial arts.

WHAT IS MIXED MARTIAL ARTS?

Mixed martial arts ("MMA") is an exciting, intense and evolving combat sport in which competitors use interdisciplinary forms of fighting that include jiu-jitsu, judo, karate, boxing, kickboxing, wrestling and others to their strategic and tactical advantage in a supervised match. Scoring for mixed martial arts events is based on athletic-commission approved definitions and rules for striking (blows with the hands, feet, knees or elbows) and grappling (submission, choke holds, throws or takedowns). No single discipline reigns supreme.

WHAT IS "ULTIMATE FIGHTING"?

Ultimate Fighting® is a proprietary term and registered trademark owned by Zuffa. It is defined as mixed martial arts competition between the highest level professional fighters who utilize the disciplines of jiu-jitsu, karate, boxing, kickboxing, wrestling, and other forms in UFC® live events. UFC competitors or "Ultimate Fighters" are among the best-trained and conditioned athletes in the world. While this is a highly intense sport, fighter safety is of paramount concern to UFC ownership and management. **It is noteworthy that no competitor has ever been seriously injured in a UFC event.**

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HISTORY OF THE UFC®

Started in 1993, the Ultimate Fighting Championship® brand is in its 18th 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.

About 80 years ago, a Brazilian form of MMA known as Vale Tudo (which mean "anything goes") sparked local interest in the sport. Then, the UFC organization brought MMA to the United States. The goal was to find "the Ultimate Fighting Champion" with a concept to have a tournament of the best athletes skilled in 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 MMA into a highly organized and controlled combat sport. As a result, the UFC organization now offers approximately 15 live pay-per-view events and 15-20 live television events annually through cable and satellite providers. UFC® fight programs are broadcast in approximately 135 countries and territories reaching 450 million homes worldwide in 19 different languages. Ancillary businesses now include UFC.com with over 5 million unique visitors per month, the best-selling UFC "Undisputed" videogame franchise distributed by THQ, 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 bought 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, 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 regulation in each of the jurisdictions that have taken the necessary steps to properly regulate this sport.

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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, Florida, Ohio,

Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Massachusetts State Athletic Commissions and we hope that Connecticut will see fit to properly regulate the sport as well. In all, 44 States, the District of Columbia, many 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.

The UFC organization 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, often times, goes beyond the requirements of certain states to ensure the health and safety of the participants.

CONCLUSION

MMA is one of the fastest growing sports in the world. Its popularity is skyrocketing. However, for both the safety of the participants and to maintain the integrity of the sport, proper regulation by State Athletic Commissions is required. The importance of stringent medical requirements, drug testing and the application of the rules by highly trained and skilled referees and judges cannot be stressed enough.

Once again, I am honored to be permitted to testify before this Committee. We would 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,

Marc Ratner