

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.