

**Testimony in Support of
HB 5277, An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts**

**Charles H. Steedman
Chair, Connecticut Sports Advisory Board
Executive Committee Member, Connecticut Convention and Sports Bureau**

February 26, 2013

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and Members of the Public Safety Committee:

I offer this written testimony in strong support of *HB 5277, An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts*, on behalf of the Connecticut Convention and Sports Bureau ("CTCSB") and its Connecticut Sports Advisory Board ("CSAB"). Our mission is to attract and retain the very best in sports events to the State of Connecticut. In doing so, we maximize revenues for the state, various municipalities, not to mention revenue to local hotels, restaurants and parking facilities.

HB 5277 would finally allow Connecticut to join the 48 other states that have legalized the sport of Mixed Martial Arts ("MMA"). This aims bill legalize and sanction MMA and essentially subjects the sport to the same stringent laws which govern 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 tax is in addition to the 10% admissions tax that currently is levied on sports events and venues throughout the State,

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

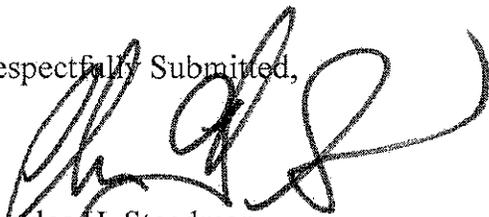
create jobs for workers in these facilities. In addition, there will be significantly increased revenues to our restaurants, hotels, and parking facilities.

Currently, 46 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. 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 in order that matches are not occurring that are 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.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles H. Steedman', written over the text 'Respectfully Submitted,'.

Charles H. Steedman

Chair, Connecticut Sports Advisory Board

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