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To Co-Chairs Senator Hartley and Representative Dargan, Vice Chairs Senator Ayala and Representative Verrengia, Ranking Members Senator Guglielmo and Representative Giegler, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee

I respectfully submit testimony today in favor of Proposed H.B. No. 5277 AN ACT LEGALIZING AND REGULATING MIXED MARTIAL ARTS.

Over the last twenty years, the sport of mixed martial arts has grown tremendously as a competitive sport and popular form of entertainment. Each year, thousands of eager participants at all skill levels take classes in various forms of martial arts training including Brazilian jiu-jitsu, muay thai, and kickboxing. Here in Connecticut, several mixed martial arts experts from abroad have opened facilities and instructed interested people of all ages on tactical self-defense techniques. While some may argue that it carries a violent stigma, many participants and spectators have come to appreciate mixed martial arts as a valuable professional sport.

Despite the risks involved, mixed martial arts is now highly regulated, much like any other professional sport. The legalization of professional mixed martial arts fighting will require licensing, medical requirements, and careful oversight. Those who partake in mixed martial arts and support the legalization of professional fighting events fully understand these requirements and will ensure their full implementation.

Permitting professional mixed martial arts in Connecticut will bring a significant amount of much needed tax revenue. Professional fights in other states often attract sell-out crowds of devoted spectators. It would be very beneficial to permit the state of Connecticut to join that group.

I urge the committee to vote favorably on this legislation. I thank the committee today for their time and consideration.

Regards,

Jonathan M. Sousa, Esq.