



State of Connecticut
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Testimony before the Public Safety and Security Committee
Thursday, February 7th
11:00 AM
Room 1E Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: HB 5277, An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, my name is Representative Matt Ritter from the First District serving Hartford.

I am testifying in support of Re: HB 5277, An Act Legalizing and Regulating Mixed Martial Arts. This bill legalizes mixed martial arts, and essentially subjects the sport to the same stringent laws governing 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 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 increased revenues to our restaurants, hotels, and parking facilities estimates which will be given to you by the facilities that hope to host these events.

Currently, 45 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. Vermont allows mixed martial arts matches without regulation. 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 and not allow matches to go 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.