



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
SENATE BILL 901
AAC BOXING AND MIXED MARTIAL ARTS**

Senator Larson, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Chris Lawrence and I represent Global Spectrum, the company that manages and operates the XL Center here in Hartford and the Stadium at Rentschler Field in East Hartford on behalf of the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA). I serve as General Manager of both facilities. Global-Spectrum currently manages a variety of over 125 different facilities around the world and has experience in dealing with many different MMA promoters and agencies.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of Senate Bill 901, *An Act Concerning Boxing and Mixed Martial Arts*. As you are well aware, in 2013, the General Assembly adopted legislation permitting mixed martial arts events here in Connecticut. Among other provisions, that legislation required promoters to cover any potential or future injuries incurred by MMA competitors as a result of a match in the State. Unfortunately, the undue financial burden imposed by this requirement has severely hampered – if not eliminated – our ability to book MMA events at the XL Center.

The legislation before you eliminates this provision and instead requires promoters to provide insurance to cover all medical, dental, surgical and hospital care for any injuries sustained during the course of an MMA match. This new requirement brings mixed martial arts in line with the State's current boxing regulations. The popularity and growth of MMA events over the last decade has provided many of our Global-Spectrum managed facilities, similar to the XL Center, to offer new and exciting entertainment offerings for patrons, additional employment opportunities for local workforces, financial benefits for local businesses and increased hotel room occupancy in those downtown areas. Having the ability to host MMA events, particularly partnering with the UFC, would allow Connecticut to offer the same benefits. In addition, putting us on the map for other New England and national MMA promoters.

As facility managers, we are tasked with securing events and experiences that will provide the prospect of increasing revenues to the bottom line of our facilities, and in the case of the XL Center, ultimately reducing the State subsidy. Having the ability to host MMA will provide us with a great opportunity to add a premier event to our annual calendar and continue in our pursuit to grow revenues. Additionally, having the chance to partner with UFC in particular will drastically increase the overall profile of the XL Center and Hartford as an entertainment destination. These types of events generate a large amount of PR and media coverage, locally, regionally and nationally. Demonstrating that we can continue to attract and execute these high-profile events will allow us to continue to compete for more in the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today and I would be happy to answer any questions.