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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5201 AN ACT CONCERNING MUAY THAI AS A
FORM OF MIXED MARTIAL ARTS**

My name is Kirslyn Foster-Yee and I am here to testify in support of HB 5201, An Act Concerning Muay Thai as a Form of Mixed Martial Arts. I am a resident of Middletown CT and am currently employed by Thornton Martial Arts and Fitness LLC, a martial arts studio located in East Hartford, CT.

This bill is important to me because as someone who sees the sport from the outside, the incredible transformations of our students, with guidance from our academy, is second to none. Not only the physical improvements our members have earned, but the increased mental strength from training as well. Our members have improved self-confidence, have overcome mental obstacles, have been introduced to self-defense, and have become a part of a massive community and support system that will always have their back.

Having the ability for martial art schools in the state to compete locally allows for countless benefits for our state as well as its community. Our academy members range from children to adults, so being able to hold local events would grant us all the ability to bring more students to competitions and to have more supporters cheering from the sidelines. The increased revenue from competition would aid in boosting our economy as well as building CT into becoming a host destination for competition.

Muay Thai is globally recognized as the most effective stand-up striking martial art. Muay Thai focuses on strategy, technique, and how well a movement is executed - rather than just focusing on who can throw the hardest punch. I think this is an important aspect of the sport - our students understand the “why” behind their movements and learn the best way to out-smart their opponent.

As the first person to greet students at our academy, the energy that enters through our doors when class is about to begin... it’s contagious. Our students are present, eager, and ready to gain the endless benefits that this sport has to offer them.

