

Hello, I'm writing in support of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Thornton's recent speeches regarding our hope for Muay Thai to please be given a chance to flourish here in Connecticut.

My journey into this beautiful and unique art and sport began in 2000 in Santa Barbara, CA. I struggled to drop excess weight that year after finishing four years as a journeyman offensive tackle at Princeton University. My older brother, Tristan, a bodyguard for the US Ambassador to Iraq, encouraged me to begin my Muay Thai journey back then for self-defense, fun, and especially for fitness. I dropped from 320lbs to 220lbs after one year of training 2-3x/week!

When I moved to New England to begin my career at Merrill Lynch in 2007, I focused for awhile on Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, another amazing martial art (that perfectly complements Muay Thai to form a comprehensive and legitimate self-defense system). Eventually (and thankfully!) I met "Kru" (teacher in Thai) Ed at the gym in East Hartford that he runs with his amazing wife and staff. I learned more in under a year of training with Ed and some of his top students, such as Paul Banasiak (who currently competes professionally in Thailand!), than I did in many years at many other reputable gyms in this region. Ed is a fellow veritable teacher at heart with a special gift for his craft. I know this as a former classroom teacher and football coach (that was my first career for several years before successfully transitioning to the fields of personal finance and portfolio management). The Thorntons, it should be noted, have empowered many children and other young people through their dynamic curricula, too!

Together they personify a warm and true warrior-poet spirit and they express it harmoniously through the remarkable prism of Muay Thai. Please kindly consider our collective call for competition here in this great state! Thank you very much for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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