## HOUSE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS AND INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL 444

57th Legislature - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

## AN ACT

RELATING TO ATHLETIC COMPETITION; TRANSFERRING NEW MEXICO
ATHLETIC COMMISSION AUTHORITY TO THE REGULATION AND LICENSING
DEPARTMENT; EXPANDING THE NUMBER OF COMMISSION MEMBERS;
CHANGING COMMISSION COMPOSITION; PERMITTING THE FORMATION OF
COMMITTEES; ELIMINATING THE MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD; ADDING
LICENSING CATEGORIES; AMENDING THE TYPES OF FEES DEDICATED TO
THE ATHLETIC COMMISSION FUND; AMENDING AND REPEALING SECTIONS
OF THE NMSA 1978; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 60-2A-2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 2, as amended) is amended to read:

"60-2A-2. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Professional Athletic Competition Act:

[A. "board" means the medical advisory board;

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$\frac{B_{\bullet}}{A_{\bullet}}$ "closed circuit telecast" means a telecast
that is not intended to be available for viewing without the
payment of a fee, including a pay-per-view telecast, podcast
webcast, streaming media or any electronic transmission to an
arena, bar, lounge, club, entertainment or meeting center or
private residence:

- [C.] B. "commission" means the New Mexico athletic commission;
- $[\frac{D_{\bullet}}{C_{\bullet}}]$  "contestant" means a person who engages in unarmed combat for remuneration;
- [E.] D. "department" means the regulation and licensing department;
- E. "event coordinator" means a person who oversees the detailed requirements of the Professional Athletic Competition Act on behalf of the promoter before, during and after the exhibition;
- F. "exhibition" means any contest or portion of a fight card, bout or event in any form of unarmed combat regulated by the [commission and conducted, held or televised on a closed circuit telecast originating in New Mexico] department;
- "foreign co-promoter" means a promoter who has no place of business in this state;
  - "manager": Η.
    - (1) means a person who:

- IIew	= delete
underscored marerial	[bracketed material]

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(a) undertakes to repres	sent the
interests of another person by contract, agree	ment or other
arrangement in procuring, arranging or conduct	ing a
professional contest or exhibition in which the	e represented
person will participate as a contestant;	

- (b) directs or controls the activities of an unarmed combatant relating to the participation of the unarmed combatant in professional contests or exhibitions;
- (c) receives or is entitled to receive at least ten percent of the gross purse or gross income of any professional unarmed combatant for services relating to the participation of the unarmed combatant in a professional contest or exhibition; or
- receives compensation for services as an agent or representative of an unarmed combatant; and
- (2) does not include an attorney who is licensed to practice law in this state if the attorney's participation in any of the activities described in Paragraph (1) of this subsection is limited solely to the legal representation of a client who is an unarmed combatant;
- "professional boxer" means an individual who I. competes for money, prizes or purses or who teaches, pursues or assists in the practice of boxing as a means of obtaining a livelihood or pecuniary gain;
- "professional contest" means any professional .231124.1

boxing, professional kickboxing, professional martial arts, professional mixed martial arts or sports entertainment wrestling contest or exhibition, whether or not an admission fee is charged for admission of the public;

- K. "professional kickboxer" means an individual who competes for money, prizes or purses or who teaches, pursues or assists in the practice of kickboxing as a means of obtaining a livelihood or pecuniary gain;
- L. "professional martial artist" means an individual who competes for money, prizes or purses or who teaches, pursues or assists in the practice of martial arts as a means of obtaining a livelihood or pecuniary gain;
- M. "professional mixed martial artist" means an individual who competes for money, prizes or purses or who teaches, pursues or assists in the practice of mixed martial arts as a means of obtaining a livelihood or pecuniary gain;
- N. "promoter" means any person, and in the case of a corporate promoter includes any officer, director or stockholder of the corporation, who produces or stages any professional boxing, professional kickboxing, professional martial arts, professional mixed martial arts or sports entertainment wrestling contest, exhibition or closed circuit [television show] telecast;
- O. "purse" means the financial guarantee or any other remuneration, or part thereof, for which professional .231124.1

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boxers, professional kickboxers, professional martial artists
professional mixed martial artists or sports entertainment
wrestlers are participating in a contest or exhibition and
includes the participant's share of any payment received for
radio broadcasting, television or motion picture rights;

- P. "ring official" means any person who performs an official function during the progress of a contest or exhibition;
- Q. "sanctioning organization" means an organization
  whose rules for a particular unarmed combat contest are
  recognized by the commission;
- $[Q_{\bullet}]$   $R_{\bullet}$  "sports entertainment wrestler" means an individual who competes for money, prizes or purses or who teaches, pursues or assists in the practice of sports entertainment wrestling as a means of obtaining a livelihood or pecuniary gain;
- [R-] <u>S.</u> "sports entertainment wrestling" means an activity in which participants struggle hand-to-hand primarily for the purpose of providing entertainment to spectators rather than conducting a bona fide athletic contest;
- T. "technical zone" means the area between the ring apron and the first row of seats;
- [S.]  $\underline{\text{U.}}$  "unarmed combat" means boxing, kickboxing, martial arts, mixed martial arts, sports entertainment wrestling or any form of competition in which a blow is usually .231124.1

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struck that may reasonably be expected to inflict injury; and  $[\frac{T_{\bullet}}] \ \underline{V_{\bullet}} \ "unarmed combatant" means:$ 

- (1) a person who engages in unarmed combat in a contest or exhibition, whether or not the person receives remuneration, including a boxer, kickboxer, martial artist, mixed martial artist, sports entertainment wrestler or other contestant; or
- (2) an amateur boxer who is registered with United States amateur boxing, incorporated, or any other amateur organization recognized by the commission and participates in an amateur boxing contest or exhibition in the state that is registered and sanctioned by United States amateur boxing, incorporated, or golden gloves of America."
- SECTION 2. Section 60-2A-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 3, as amended) is amended to read:
- "60-2A-3. COMMISSION CREATED--MEMBERSHIP--TERMS-RESTRICTIONS.--
- A. There is created the "New Mexico athletic commission". The commission [ $\frac{1}{2}$  administratively attached to the department.
- B. The commission shall [consist of five members] who are New Mexico residents and who are appointed by the governor. Three of the members shall have experience in the professional sports and the other two members shall represent the public. The public members shall not have been licensed or .231124.1

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1 have any financial interest, direct or indirect, in the 2 profession regulated. The members shall be appointed for 3 staggered terms of four years each. Each member shall hold 4 office until the expiration of the term for which appointed or until a successor has been appointed. Not more than three 5 6 members of the commission shall be appointed from the same 7 political party. No commission member shall serve more than 8 two full terms consecutively. C. No member shall at any time during his

membership on the commission promote or sponsor any professional contest or have any financial interest in the promotion or sponsorship of any professional contest] advise the department, the legislature and the governor to promote the growth of unarmed combat sports in New Mexico.

The commission consists of seven members who are New Mexico residents and who are appointed by the governor. Two members shall have experience promoting sporting events or shall have participated in sporting events as a contestant. One member shall be a New Mexico-licensed attorney. One member shall be a licensed medical professional. The other three members shall represent the public. The public members shall not have been licensed or have a financial interest, direct or indirect, in the profession regulated. The members shall be appointed for staggered terms of four years each. Each member shall hold office until the expiration of the term for which

1	that member was appointed or until a successor has been
2	appointed. No more than four members of the commission shall
3	be appointed from the same political party. A commission
4	member shall not serve more than two full terms consecutively.
5	SECTION 3. Section 60-2A-4 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980,

Chapter 90, Section 4, as amended) is amended to read:

"60-2A-4. [<del>CHAIRMAN</del>] CHAIR--RULES--DUTIES--COMMITTEES.--

- A. The commission shall elect annually in December a [chairman] chair and such other officers as it deems necessary. The commission shall meet as often as necessary for the conduct of business, but no less than twice a year.

  Meetings shall be called by the [chairman] chair or upon the written request of three or more members of the commission.

  [Three] Four members, at least one of whom is a public member, shall constitute a quorum.
- B. The commission may adopt, purchase and use a seal.
- C. The commission may [adopt] recommend rules to be adopted by the department, subject to the provisions of the State Rules Act, for the administration of the Professional Athletic Competition Act not inconsistent with the provisions of the Professional Athletic Competition Act. The rules shall include [but not be limited to the:
- (1) number and qualifications of ring officials required in a professional contest;

(2) powers, duties and compensation of ring

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2	officials; and
3	(3) qualifications of licensees] the
4	qualifications for licensees.
5	D. The commission [shall prepare all forms of
6	contracts between sponsors, licensees, promoters and
7	contestants] may establish committees as the commission deems
8	necessary to fulfill its duties. Committees may include other
9	public members, but all committees shall be chaired by a member
10	of the commission. The public members of the committee shall
11	serve without compensation."
12	SECTION 4. Section 60-2A-8.2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2007,
13	Chapter 109, Section 2) is amended to read:
14	"60-2A-8.2. JURISDICTION OF [COMMISSION] DEPARTMENT OVER
15	UNARMED COMBAT CONTESTS APPROVAL OF SANCTIONING
16	ORGANIZATIONS
17	A. The [commission] department shall have sole
18	direction, management, control and jurisdiction over all
19	contests or exhibitions of unarmed combat to be conducted, held
20	or given within New Mexico, and no contest or exhibition may be
21	conducted, held or given within the state except in accordance
22	with the provisions of the Professional Athletic Competition
23	Act.
24	B. The commission may approve one or more
25	sanctioning organizations for professional or amateur unarmed

combat. A sanctioning organization approved by the commission shall report to the commission the results of all contests or exhibitions sanctioned by the sanctioning organization.

[B.] C. Any contest involving a form of [Oriental] unarmed [self-defense] combat must be conducted pursuant to rules for that form that are approved by the commission before the contest is conducted, held or given in the state except in accordance with the provisions of the Professional Athletic Competition Act."

SECTION 5. Section 60-2A-9 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 9) is amended to read:

"60-2A-9. LICENSES TO CONDUCT PROFESSIONAL CONTESTS.--

- A. The [commission] department may issue licenses to conduct, hold or give a professional contest to any promoter under such terms and in accordance with such rules as the commission may adopt.
- B. Any application for [such] a license shall be in writing and shall correctly show the promoter. The application shall be accompanied by the annual fee prescribed by law.
- C. Before any license is granted to a promoter, the promoter must file a bond in an amount fixed by the commission but not less than two thousand dollars (\$2,000) with good and sufficient surety and conditioned for the faithful performance by the promoter of the provisions of the Professional Athletic Competition Act."

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SE	CTIO	N 6.	Section	n 6	0-2A-10	NMSA	1978	(bein	g Laws	1980,
Chapter	90,	Secti	on 10,	as	amended	) is	amend	ed to	read:	

"60-2A-10. LICENSES FOR PROMOTERS, BOXERS, TRAINERS, RING OFFICIALS AND OTHERS.--

A. All promoters, foreign co-promoters, matchmakers, professional boxers, professional kickboxers, professional martial artists, professional mixed martial artists, sports entertainment wrestlers, managers, seconds, announcers, referees, trainers, booking agents, event coordinators and timekeepers shall be licensed by the [commission] department.

B. No person shall be permitted to participate either directly or indirectly in any professional contest unless the person has first procured a license from the [commission.

C. Any person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a petty misdemeanor] department."

SECTION 7. Section 60-2A-11 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 11) is amended to read:

"60-2A-11. LICENSES FOR PHYSICIANS.--The [commission]

department may issue licenses without fees to physicians,

authorizing them to [officiate] monitor and evaluate

participants and confer with the referee when necessary at

professional contests."

SECTION 8. Section 60-2A-12 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, .231124.1

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1	Chapter 90, Section 12, as amended) is amended to read:						
2	"60-2A-12. LICENSE FEES						
3	A. The annual license fee shall not exceed the						
4	following amounts:						
5	(1) promoters \$500.00						
6	(2) foreign co-promoters						
7	(3) referees						
8	(4) timekeepers and announcers 75.00						
9	(5) seconds and trainers 75.00						
10	(6) managers						
11	(7) professional boxers 75.00						
12	(8) professional kickboxers 75.00						
13	(9) booking agents 75.00						
14	(10) matchmakers						
15	(11) judges 75.00						
16	(12) professional mixed martial artists 75.00						
17	(13) amateur mixed martial artists 75.00						
18	(14) professional martial artists 75.00						
19	(15) sports entertainment wrestlers 75.00						
20	(16) event coordinators						
21	Every license shall expire at midnight on December 31 of						
22	the year in which the license is issued.						
23	B. An unarmed combatant may hold a professional						

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license in one [commission] licensing category while

maintaining amateur status in other unarmed combat

disciplines."

SECTION 9. Section 60-2A-13 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 13) is amended to read:

"60-2A-13. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST.--The [commission]

department shall not issue [any] a license for a professional contest unless it is satisfied that the promoter is the real party in interest and intends to conduct, hold or give [such contests himself] the contest or unless the promoter receives at least twenty-five percent of the net receipts. A license may be revoked at any time if the [commission] department finds that the promoter is not the real party in interest."

SECTION 10. Section 60-2A-14 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 14, as amended) is amended to read:

"60-2A-14. SUSPENSION--REVOCATION OF LICENSES.--

- A. The [commission] department may suspend or revoke [any] a license when in its judgment the licensee:
- (1) participated in [any] <u>a</u> sham or fake professional contest;
- (2) is guilty of a failure to give [his] the licensee's best efforts in a professional contest;
- (3) is guilty of [any] <u>a</u> foul or unsportsmanlike conduct in connection with a professional contest; or
- (4) is guilty of participating in an event while under the influence of illegal drugs.

B. Before revocation of a license, the [ <del>commission</del> ]
department shall afford the licensee opportunity for a hearing,
and upon request of the licensee and after reasonable notice,
the [ <del>commission</del> ] <u>department</u> shall conduct a hearing on the
revocation, permitting the licensee to appear personally and by
counsel, introduce evidence and examine and cross-examine
witnesses.

C. [A majority vote of the members of the commission is required to revoke a license.] The [commission]

department shall file a written report of its findings,

determinations and order with the record of the proceedings and shall send a copy [thereof] of the report to the licensee."

SECTION 11. Section 60-2A-15 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 15) is amended to read:

"60-2A-15. SUBPOENA POWER.--The [commission, on a vote of the majority of the members thereof] department may issue subpoenas in connection with any investigation or hearing, requiring the attendance and testimony of any person or the production of books and papers of any licensee or other person whom the [commission] department believes to have information, books or papers of importance to the investigation or hearing."

SECTION 12. Section 60-2A-19 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 19, as amended) is amended to read:

"60-2A-19. WITHHOLDING OF PURSE.--

A. The [commission] department or its executive .231124.1

secretary may order a promoter to withhold a part of a purse or other funds belonging or payable to a contestant, manager or second if, in the judgment of the [commission] department or the executive secretary, the contestant is not competing honestly or to the best of the contestant's skill and ability or if the manager or second has violated any of the provisions of the Professional Athletic Competition Act or a rule promulgated [under] pursuant to that act.

- B. This section does not apply to any sports entertainment wrestler who appears not to be competing honestly or to the best of the wrestler's skill and ability.
- C. Upon the withholding of a part of a purse pursuant to this section, the commission shall immediately schedule a hearing on the matter as promptly as possible. If it is determined that the contestant, manager or second is not entitled to a part of a share of the purse or other funds, the promoter shall turn that money over to the commission, and it shall become forfeit to the state and be disposed of as are fees."

SECTION 13. Section 60-2A-20 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 20) is amended to read:

"60-2A-20. ATTENDANCE AT WEIGH-INS--MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS--PROFESSIONAL CONTESTS.--

A. The executive secretary or a member of the commission shall be present at all weigh-ins [medical .231124.1

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examinations] and professional contests. [and] The executive
secretary shall see that the provisions of the Professional
Athletic Competition Act and the rules made pursuant [thereto]
to that act are strictly enforced in consultation with an
assigned commissioner.

- B. Every [participant] contestant in a professional boxing contest shall be present and weighed in no later than twelve o'clock noon on the day of the professional contest.
- C. The commissioners present at a fight shall have
  no authority during the event and shall not enter the technical
  zone."

SECTION 14. Section 60-2A-21 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 21, as amended) is amended to read:

"60-2A-21. LENGTH OF PROFESSIONAL CONTESTS--ROUNDS.--No professional boxing contest shall be more than [fifteen] twelve rounds in length, and each round shall not exceed three minutes in length. There shall be a one-minute rest between rounds. The commission shall adopt rules governing the length of professional kickboxing, professional martial arts, professional mixed martial arts and sports entertainment wrestling contests, the duration of rounds and the period of rest between rounds."

SECTION 15. Section 60-2A-24 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 24, as amended) is amended to read:

"60-2A-24. ATHLETIC COMMISSION FUND.--The proceeds of .231124.1

[the regulatory fee on promotions and of the supervisory fee on closed-circuit television or motion pictures, together with any] license fees or other fees authorized pursuant to the Professional Athletic Competition Act shall be deposited with the state treasurer to the credit of the "athletic commission fund", which is hereby created. Money in the fund is subject to appropriation by the legislature. Expenditures from the athletic commission fund shall only be made on vouchers issued and signed by the person designated by the [commission] department upon warrants drawn by the department of finance and administration in accordance with the budget approved by the department of finance and administration."

SECTION 16. Section 60-2A-29 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Section 29) is amended to read:

"60-2A-29. PENALTY.--[Any] A person [violating] who violates the provisions of the Professional Athletic Competition Act is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction [therefor] shall be punished, in the discretion of the court, by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or by imprisonment in the county jail not to exceed three months or by both such fine and imprisonment."

SECTION 17. Section 60-2A-31 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1981, Chapter 327, Section 1) is amended to read:

"60-2A-31. BOXING HEADGEAR REQUIRED WHEN UNDER FIFTEEN
YEARS OF AGE [PENALTY].--[A.] It is unlawful for any person to
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1	permit, promote or sponsor any person under the age of fifteen
2	years to train as a boxer, engage in boxing matches or compete
3	in school boxing exhibitions or events without wearing
4	protective headgear.
5	[B. Any person violating the provisions of
6	Subsection A of this section is guilty of a petty
7	misdemeanor.]"
8	SECTION 18. Section 60-2A-32 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1983,
9	Chapter 146, Section 1) is amended to read:
10	"60-2A-32. PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR REQUIRED IN ALL AMATEUR
11	BOXING

- It is unlawful for any person to permit, sponsor or promote any amateur to train as a boxer, engage in boxing matches or compete in boxing events without wearing protective headgear meeting the standards approved under the official rules of the USA [amateur] boxing [federation] incorporated.
- $[\frac{\text{Any}}{\text{A}}] \underline{\text{A}} \text{ person } [\frac{\text{violating}}{\text{violates}}] \underline{\text{who violates}} \text{ the}$ provisions of Subsection A of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor."

**SECTION 19.** Section 60-2A-34 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2017, Chapter 52, Section 1) is amended to read:

"60-2A-34. UNLICENSED ACTIVITY--DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS--CIVIL PENALTY.--A person who is not licensed to engage in a professional athletic competition activity regulated by the [board] department is subject to disciplinary .231124.1

proceedings by the [board] department as provided in the Uniform Licensing Act. The provisions of Section 61-1-3.2 NMSA 1978 notwithstanding, the [board] department may impose a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000) against a person who engages in a professional athletic competition activity regulated by the [board] department without a license. In addition, the [board] department may assess the person for administrative costs, including investigative costs and the cost of conducting a hearing."

SECTION 20. Section 60-2A-36 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2024, Chapter 30, Section 10) is amended to read:

"60-2A-36. PROFESSIONAL BOXING STATE CHAMPIONS AND RANKED CONTENDERS.--

- A. The commission shall declare a state champion professional boxer in each weight class.
- B. At least two times per year, the commission shall publish a list of professional boxing top ten ranked contenders in each weight class.
- C. The professional boxing state champion shall defend the championship title within six months of winning the title and every six months thereafter against a challenger in the champion's own weight class. If the champion does not defend the title or cannot defend the title for physical reasons that are permanent, the commission shall forfeit the .231124.1

championship and declare the title vacant. In the case of a champion not defending a title within six months due to illness or injury that is not permanent, the champion shall submit to the commission a physician's report describing the illness or injury and an estimated time when the champion will be able to defend the championship title. It [will] shall be at the discretion of the commission, after considering the physician's report, whether a stay of the six-month title defense requirement [will] shall be permitted."

SECTION 21. APPROPRIATION.--Two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the regulation and licensing department for expenditure in fiscal year 2026 to fund two full-time employees to administer the Professional Athletic Competition Act. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2026 shall revert to the general fund.

SECTION 22. REPEAL.--Sections 60-2A-7, 60-2A-23 and 60-2A-25 through 60-2A-28 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1980, Chapter 90, Sections 7, 23 and 25 through 28, as amended) are repealed.

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