

LFC Requester:

Noah Montano

AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2026 REGULAR SESSION

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SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Date Prepared: 2/2/2026

Check all that apply:

Bill Number: House Bill 252

Original Correction

Amendment Substitute

Sponsor: Reps. Art De La Cruz & Antonio Maestas

Agency Name and Code Number:

Regulation & Licensing Dept. (RLD), 420

Short Title: Transfer Athletic Commission Authority

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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
N/A	100.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		
(unknown*)	(92.4)	(92.4)	Recurring	Athletic Commission Fund

(Parenthesis () indicate revenue decreases)

*See Note 1 in "Fiscal Implications" section, below.

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	N/A	35.00***	N/A	35.0**	Nonrecurring	Athletic Commission Fund
	N/A	60.0***	60.0***	120.0***	Recurring	Athletic Commission Fund
	N/A	40.0****	40.0****	80.0****	Recurring	Athletic Commission Fund

**See Note 2 in “Fiscal Implications” section, below.

*** See Note 3 in “Fiscal Implications” section, below.

**** See Note 4 in “Fiscal Implications” section, below.

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to: Similar to 2025 House Bill 444

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: House Bill 252 (HB 252)

HB 252 substantially restructures the Professional Athletic Competition Act, §§ 60-2A-1 to -36, NMSA 1978 (Act). It transfers specific administrative authority of the New Mexico Athletic Commission (Commission) to the Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD).

HB 252 expands the Commission from five (5) to seven (7) members, revises its required composition, and allows the Commission to form committees. The currently required Medical Advisory Board to the Commission would be eliminated, and rulemaking authority would be amended so that the Commission would recommend rules and the RLD then adopt those rules. The bill revises license terms so licenses issued under the Act expire one (1) year from issuance and allows an unarmed combatant to hold professional licenses in one (1) discipline while remaining an amateur in others.

HB 252 modifies Commission powers and procedures, shifting power to the newly described executive director including jurisdiction over contests, approval of sanctioning organizations, contract requirements, purse withholding, license suspension and revocation, and attendance at weigh-ins and contests. It reduces the maximum length of professional boxing matches from fifteen (15) to twelve (12) rounds and updates safety and headgear requirements for amateur and youth boxing.

HB 252 amends funding provisions so license fees are deposited into the Athletic Commission Fund, revises penalties for violations, and clarifies civil and disciplinary authority for unlicensed activity. It also updates provisions governing state boxing champions and title defenses. The bill appropriates one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) from the General Fund to RLD for fiscal year 2027 to hire staff to administer the changes to the Act. HB 252 repeals the statutes for a medical advisory board, regulatory fees and supervisory fees for telecasts.

Summaries by Section:

Section 1 changes § 60-2A-2, Definitions. It removes references to the Medical Advisory Board, modernizes terms to include webcasts and streaming, adds two (2) new roles (event coordinator and sanctioning organization), defines “resident” and adds competitive wrestling/competitive wrestlers to the definition of unarmed combat/unarmed combatants, respectively.

Section 2 changes § 60-2A-3, Commission Created, Terms, Restrictions. It makes the Commission advisory to the RLD, the legislature and governor. It expands the Commission from five (5) to seven (7) members, changing its composition to include two (2) members with experience in unarmed combat or promotion, a licensed attorney, a medical professional, and three (3) public members. Political party limits are adjusted so that no more than four (4) members are from the same party.

Section 3 changes § 60-2A-4, to Chair, Rules Duties, Committees. Language is updated from “chairman” to the non-gendered term “chair” throughout, increases the quorum requirement to four (4), and authorizes the Commission to form committees. It decreases the Commission’s power in rulemaking, stating the Commission may recommend rules to the RLD rather than adopting rules directly.

Section 4 changes § 60-2A-8.2, to Jurisdiction of Commission over Unarmed Combat Contests, Approval of Sanctioning Organizations. The Commission is allowed to approve sanctioning organizations, which must report contest results to the Commission. Removes outdated language regarding “Oriental” combat.

Section 5 changes § 60-2A-9, Licenses to Conduct Professional Contests, transferring authority to issue licenses for professional contests from the Commission to the RLD.

Section 6 changes § 60-2A-10, Licenses for Promoters, Boxers, Trainers, Ring Officials and Others, Licensing of Participants and Officials requiring the RLD to license all promoters, contestants, officials, managers, and related personnel instead of the Commission and eliminates criminal penalties for unlicensed participation.

Section 7 changes § 60-2A-11 from Licenses for Physicians to Licenses for Medical Professionals, allowing the RLD to issue no-fee licenses to medical professionals instead of just physicians to monitor contestants and consult with officials during events.

Section 8 changes § 60-2A-12, License Fees, adding a fee for the new license type, “event coordinator,” changes the license expiration to one (1) year after license issuance, and allowing athletes to be professional in one (1) discipline while remaining amateur in others.

Section 9 changes § 60-2A-13, Real Party in Interest, requiring the RLD to ensure promoters are the true operators of contests or receive at least twenty-five percent (25%) of net receipts. Licenses may be revoked if this requirement is not met.

Section 10 changes § 60-2A-14, Suspension, Revocation of Licenses, to clarify language, and require a report to be sent to the licensee after a hearing for revocation.

Section 11 changes § 60-2A-16, Contracts, changes the name of the assigned RLD staff member from “executive secretary” to “executive director.”

Section 12 changes § 60-2A-19, Withholding of Purse, changes the name of the assigned RLD staff member from “executive secretary” to “executive director.”

Section 13 changes § 60-2A-20, Attendance at Weigh-Ins, Medical Examinations, Professional Contests, requiring the executive director and a commissioner to attend weigh-ins and contests and ensure enforcement of the Act.

Section 14 changes § 60-2A-21, Length of Professional Contests, Rounds, reducing professional boxing matches from a maximum of fifteen (15) rounds to twelve (12) rounds and authorizing rules governing competitive wrestling while removing sports entertainment wrestling.

Section 15 changes § 60-2A-24, Athletic Commission Fund, removes regulatory and supervisory fees and revises expenditure procedures to go through the RLD.

Section 16 changes § 60-2A-29, Penalty, updating language and reaffirming that violations of the Act are misdemeanors, with possible fines and jail time.

Section 17 changes § 60-2A-31, Boxing Headgear Required when under Fifteen Years of Age, removes the penalty listed, allowing the penalty described in § 60-2A-29 to govern an infraction.

Section 18 changes § 60-2A-32, Protective Headgear in all Amateur Boxing, changes the organization name from “USA Amateur Boxing Federation” to “USA Boxing Incorporated.”

Section 19 changes § 60-2A-34, Unlicensed Activity, Disciplinary Proceedings, Civil Penalty, removes “medical advisory board” and replaces with the “Commission.”

Section 20 changes § 60-2A-36, Professional Boxing State Champions and Ranked Contenders, updates the language, but does not change anything substantial.

Section 21 appropriates one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to the RLD for FY27 to hire staff to administer the Act, with any unspent funds at the end of FY27 reverting back to the General Fund.

Section 22 repeals § 60-2A-7, Medical Advisory Board; § 60-2A-23, Regulatory Fees on Promotions; § 60-2A-25, Time of Payment of Regulatory Fee; § 60-2A-26, Supervisory Fee on Closed-Circuit Telecasts or Motion Pictures, Report to Commission; § 60-2A-27, Penalty; Non-Payment of Fee; and § 60-2A-28, Civil Penalty. Repealing all statutes that refer to the board, regulatory and supervisory fees.

The effective date of HB 252 is May 20, 2026.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

*Note 1: HB 252 eliminates the supervisory fees currently required in § 60-2A-26 and the regulatory fees in § 60-2A-23 and -25. The revenue from these fees were \$84,055.03 in FY25 and \$62,055.03 thus far in FY26. Averaging those revenues by month, a loss of \$7,690 each month or \$92,400 per year would likely occur if revenue and supervisory fees were removed and the RLD relied on licensing fees to fund the work of the Commission/Professional Athletic Competition Act.

****Note 2:** Currently, applications for licenses issued by the Commission are completed/received via paper application forms. An appropriation of an estimated three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) would be necessary to incorporate licensing under the Professional Athletic Competition Act into online licensing as part of the RLD's NM-Plus system.

***** Note 3:** Section 4, Subsection B requires that the RLD connect with a sanctioning organization database. Any time a database connection is required, there will be financial implications for the RLD. Connections between the RLD's licensing database and external databases (such as a sanctioning organizations' database) are typically conducted through an application programming interface (API). The RLD has experience connecting its' databases through API's and the costs to develop and implement each such API are currently expected to run thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000) per API created. Additionally, licensing fees for software required to then allow the RLD's database to share information back-and-forth with the outside database are estimated to cost approximately another sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) per year. However, as HB 252 does not specify any particular sanctioning organization database that the RLD would be required to connect to, it is not possible for the RLD to calculate all involved costs with greater specificity at this time. Estimated additional operating budget impact to the RLD for this Fiscal Impact Response reflects the costs for creating one (1) API to connect to a sanctioning organization's database and the annual software licensing fees to keep that single API connection functioning/operable.

******Note 4:** Section 13, Section A, amends the current Act to require that the executive director assigned by the RLD to the Commission be in attendance at all weigh-ins and professional contests under the Act. Multiple times per year professional contests held in New Mexico under the jurisdiction of the Act are conducted that run for a period of days, with events commonly beginning with weigh-ins taking place on Friday and the final event not concluding until late at night on Sunday. If a specific employee of the RLD is required to be in attendance the entire time of every such event, the fiscal impact to the RLD will involve highly significant amounts of overtime compensation as well as per diem and lodging expenses for the employee being incurred every year. Additional operational expenditures to be incurred by the RLD in the event the executive director employee must be present at "all" weigh-ins and professional contests are estimated to be a recurring forty-thousand dollars (\$40,000) per year.

While HB 252 provides a one-time appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in FY27 for increased necessary staffing and staff training, the allocation of additional necessary staff positions and appropriation of funding for those positions would need to be incorporated into the RLD's operating budget each year thereafter.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

See "Amendments" for proposed changes to make HB 252 more cohesive and operable with RLD.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

TECHNICAL ISSUES

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

ALTERNATIVES

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

AMENDMENTS

The intent of HB 252 appears to be to move many of the current responsibilities of the Commission to the RLD. To that end, the RLD recommends the following changes to the bill as written:

Section 1, Page 1, Subsection A, do not strike the definition of “board” from the current statute and preserve the existing “medical advisory board” under the Act. The Medical Advisory Board would continue to assist the RLD and the Commission by providing formal medical opinions on matters such as determinations regarding weight cutting, parameters for drug testing and fighting under any influence in general, safety decision-making at weigh-ins, and how to collect and properly store medical records.

Section 1, “Definitions”, include a definition for “official” or “officials” to include judges, event coordinators referees, ring officials, timekeepers and official trainees for all of these positions.

Section 1, “Definitions”, include definitions for “competitive wrestling” and “competitive wrestler” as these terms are being added to the Act in Section 1, Page 5 and 6, Subsections U and V, and these new terms are not otherwise defined in the Act.

Section 1, “Definitions”, include a definition for “media professionals” as that term is being added to the Act in Section 7, Page 11 and the term is not otherwise defined in the Act.

Section 2, Page 7, Subsection C, clearly define the role of the “attorney” position the bill adds to the membership of the Commission to make it clear that this member would not provide legal representation or advice to the Commission and thereby ensure no conflict would develop with the role of the Department of Justice attorney that advises the Commission. Consider adding a competitive wrestler if this is to be a new license type.

Section 3, Page 8, Subsection C, keep rulemaking with the Commission and the rulemaking authority over ring officials and qualifications of licensees with the RLD staff assisting and advising . Keep Section 3, Subsection C Subparagraphs (1), (2) and (3)

Section 6, Page 11, Subsection A, add “competitive wrestler and “official trainee.”

Section 8, Page12, Subsection A, add fees for competitive wrestlers and official trainees.

Section 8, Page 13, Subsection B, add that the professional status must be disclosed when competing as an amateur in another unarmed combat discipline for the safety and welfare of all combatants.

Section 10, Page 14, Subsection A, 4, change “illegal drugs” to “unauthorized substances.”

Section 11, Page 14, Subsection A, add “competitive wrestler.”

Section 11, Page 15, Subsection B (and throughout), keep the title “executive secretary” as using the title “executive director” in the Act may result in confusion concerning the identity and duties of this employee of the RLD as opposed to the Director of the Boards and Commissions Division of the RLD.

Section 13, Page 16, Subsection A, amend the language of §60-2A-20 (A) NMSA 1978 to read: “A. The executive secretary, or a designee assigned by the director of the Boards and Commissions Division of the Regulation and Licensing Department, or a member of the commission” shall be present at all weigh-ins and professional contests.” First, this proposed language addresses the RLD’s concern about the fiscal impact that would be created by mandating an employee of the RLD “and” a member of the Commission be present at all weigh-ins and professional contests. See the “Fiscal Implications” section, Note 4, above. Further, this language would help prevent a situation where an event might have to be cancelled at the last minute if the executive secretary were unexpectedly unable to attend an event (i.e. illness, etc.) and no member of the Commission were available. In such event, the RLD’s Boards and Commissions Division Director could appoint a designee to stand in for the executive secretary.

Section 15 and Section 22, keep all current supervisory and regulatory fees under the Act in place. These fees significantly fund the operations of the Commission and the RLD’s administrative support of the Commission. Removing those fees will not provide enough funding to cover the full costs of annual operation of the Commission and the duties that would be placed on the RLD under the terms of HB 252.

Section 18, Page 18, Subsection A, change the proposed language of “USA Boxing Incorporated” to “USA Boxing International”. [The organization in question is actually “USA Boxing International.”]