



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Approves Legislation on Mixed Martial Arts Bouts

DEAN G. SKELOS April 18, 2012

The New York State Senate today passed legislation (S.1707A) to legalize and regulate mixed martial arts (MMA) competitions in New York State.

“I am glad to see the Governor has said that he would strongly consider taking a position that I have held for four years now – that bringing MMA events to New York State will have a tremendously positive impact through the jobs that can be created and the spending that will stimulate the economy,” said Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-C-I, Rome), the bill’s sponsor. “Instead of just talking about this idea, we brought it to a vote and passed this legislation now, so that we can start holding events in New York this year.”

“In recent years, mixed martial arts has evolved from its beginnings into a more reformed, organized and regulated sport worthy of our review for sanctioning consideration in New York State,” Griffo said. “In nearly 20 years, it has grown into an international phenomenon. It’s long past time to look into officially sanctioning this sport in New York. Forty-seven of the 50 states allow mixed martial arts matches. There are significant tourist and tax revenue dollars flowing to neighboring states who are hosting these events. I want that revenue coming here.”

One of the fastest growing sports in America, MMA is regulated in 47 states including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California and Florida. The Ultimate Fighting Championship is the most heavily regulated of the mixed martial arts leagues. Since 2001, UFC has employed strenuous rules and regulations to protect its athletes, including medical testing and safety requirements more rigorous than those in professional boxing.

“Legalizing and regulating mixed martial arts in New York would strengthen our economy and help create new jobs,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “Almost every other state has recognized the economic potential of MMA events. It’s time for New York to join them.”

Senator Griffo said that he is also upbeat about the potential for several New York–based fighters to participate in bouts in their home state. “I think it would be great for MMA stars to be able to appear before their hometown fans,” Griffo said. “It would also be a tremendous shot in the arm for the economy.”

Senator Griffo noted that a 2008 study reported that a UFC event in New York City would generate \$11.5 million in net new economic activity: \$5.3 million in direct event spending, \$1.4 million in non-lodging visitor spending, and \$4.9 million in indirect/induced benefits. UFC events would produce substantial employee compensation: UFC events require over 300 staff working on the event, equivalent to the creation of 88 full-time local jobs per event. The 2008 study found that a UFC event in Buffalo would generate \$1.7 million in direct event spending, \$1.4 million in visitor spending, \$2.1 million in indirect/induced benefits.

“I have been trying to get New York into this market for four years,” Senator Griffo said. “The longer we wait, the more revenue we lose out on. We’re calling for action to approve these competitions to help our economy and our communities.”

The bill has been sent to the Assembly for their consideration.