



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senate Approves Mixed Martial Arts Legislation

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 6, 2013

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The New York State Senate today passed legislation to legalize and regulate mixed martial arts (MMA) competitions in New York State. The bill ([S.2755](#)), sponsored by Senator Joseph Griffo (R-C-I, Rome), would allow single discipline martial arts organizations to hold professional competitions in New York State and gives the state Athletic Commission the jurisdiction to regulate professional mixed martial arts promotions, participants, bouts and exhibitions. Senator Griffo believes that official recognition of the sport in New York is overdue. “It’s long past time that we officially sanction this sport in the state,” Griffo said. “For five years, I’ve been making the case that the numbers don’t lie; 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.”

The sport has the fastest growing fan base of any sport in the world. In America, 47 states allow MMA matches including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California and Florida. The most notable of the professional MMA leagues, the Ultimate Fighting Championship, is also the most heavily regulated. 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.

“New York needs to capitalize on opportunities that would continue strengthening our economy,” Senate Republican Leader Dean Skelos said. “I applaud Senator Griffo for leading the charge to legalize MMA in New York to help create new jobs, generate revenue, and bring our state in line with nearly every other state.”

A 2008 study reported that a UFC event in New York City would generate \$11.5 million in new net 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.

Senator Griffo also said that the increase in MMA amateur bouts statewide should spur legislative action, “The popularity of the sport and increased number of MMA competitors hailing from New York has inspired unregulated amateur bouts throughout the state,” Griffo added. “We’d be better served to have the State Athletic Commission as the recognized authority to properly regulate bouts. Right now, New York–based fighters are unable to participate in bouts in their home state, but can travel to nearly every other state to do so.”

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.