



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Senate Approves Mixed Martial Arts Legislation

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO May 14, 2014

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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 (S6502), 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 said, “Official recognition of this sport in New York is long overdue. For five years I’ve pointed out that the numbers don’t lie; bringing MMA events to New York State will have a tremendous and positive on our economy – it will generate tourism, economic development, jobs and revenue across the state and particularly upstate.”

MMA is a full-contact combat sport which combines techniques of judo, jiu-jitsu, Muay Thai, kickboxing, boxing, wrestling and other martial arts. The sport has the fastest growing fan base of any sport in the world, and is legal in every state but New York. The most notable of the professional MMA leagues, the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), 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.

A 2013 study by HR&A Advisors, a real estate, economic development and energy efficiency consulting firm, estimates that MMA events would bring over \$68 million in annual economic activity to New York, of which, \$33 million of this annual activity would be generated in upstate cities. The study also found that two UFC events in New York City would generate \$16 million in economic activity, and three UFC events in upstate cities such as Albany, Buffalo and Syracuse would produce \$18 million in economic activity and create 170 jobs.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.