



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## For 7th time, Senate Passes Griffo Bill To Legalize Mixed Martial Arts (MMA)

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO February 2, 2016

| ISSUE: **MMA, JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH**



ALBANY – For the seventh year in a row, the State Senate on Monday passed legislation sponsored by Senator Joseph Griffo that would legalize and regulate mixed martial arts in New York State.

Following the Governor's public support last month for legalizing MMA, Senator Griffo is confident that the momentum and enthusiasm exists to finally allow these fighters and

their fans to safely experience this popular sport in New York, while also offering millions of dollars in economic opportunity for hosting communities.

Senator Griffo has long led the Senate's efforts to welcome professional MMA in the state, and this proposed legislation ([S5949A](#)) would ensure that these currently amateur competitive fights would face the same oversight through the New York State Athletic Commission, like other professional sports. The bill also includes a number of provisions regarding the health, safety and financial welfare of the participants in combative sports, as well as their spectators.

"As mixed martial arts continues to rise in popularity, these passionate athletes deserve to have the privilege of fighting safely and professionally in their own home state," Senator Griffo said. "Since 2010, I have been relentless in my push to lift the statewide ban on professional MMA, and I am proud that we are now the closest we've ever come to joining the rest of the nation in legalizing this competitive sport."

This bill will now be referred to the Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblyman Joseph Morelle, D-Irondequoit. There were indications in the 2015 Legislative Session that there may have been enough support in the Assembly to pass the MMA bill during the final days of session, but the bill ultimately did not come to a vote at the time.

But Senator Griffo is optimistic that this year could be different, especially since Governor Cuomo included a call for legalizing MMA in his Executive Budget address last month.

"There is mounting energy in support of this legislation, coming from the Governor and within the Assembly," Griffo said. "The momentum looks promising to me, and I think it really helps that there are parallel paths of support for legalizing MMA in Albany. The Assembly should allow its members the chance to finally vote on this bill once and for all, so

that their voices can be heard.”

In addition to the leisure and recreational opportunities of this sport, Senator Griffo continued to highlight the significant economic impact that professional MMA competitions could bring to the communities that host these events. A 2013 study has reported that legalizing MMA in New York could potentially provide an economic boost of \$135 million each year: \$68 million annually from these events, including \$33 million generated in upstate cities alone, along with MMA training centers that could generate an added \$67 million each year from their operations.

“Whether these revenue-generating events are hosted at Madison Square Garden, the Utica Memorial Auditorium or any other venue across the state, professional MMA competitions have so much to offer the fighters, the spectators and the communities that will benefit from this boost in activity,” Griffo said.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2015-S5949A**

- 
- Introduced
  - ◦ In Committee Assembly

- In Committee Senate
  
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
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Establishes protocols for combative sports; authorizes mixed martial arts events in this state; repeals chapter 912 of the laws of 1920, relating to the regulation of boxing, sparring and wrestling

June 12, 2015

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Joseph A. Griffo**

Do you support this bill?