



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo's Senate Bill Legalizing MMA Passed In Assembly - FINALLY

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 23, 2016

| ISSUE: **MMA, HEALTH AND SAFETY, ECONOMIC AND REVENUE**



ALBANY – State Senator Joseph Griffo announced Tuesday that the New York State Assembly has finally joined the Senate in voting to legalize mixed martial arts in New York State.

For the past seven years, Senator Griffo has continuously sponsored legislation to allow New York MMA fighters the privilege of competing professionally in their own home state, with the same strict safety guidelines that regulate other professional sports.

While the State Senate has repeatedly voted each of those years to approve Senator Griffo's bill ([S5949A](#)), the Assembly has never taken up the bill in the past. But with overwhelming support this year, the Assembly finally did the right thing in allowing its members to vote their conscience, Griffo said.

"It took us seven years, but now New York State can finally make these competitive fighters proud by showing that we never gave up until they were allowed to compete in their own home state," said Senator Griffo, R-Rome. "I am proud to have led the charge in the Senate from the start to lift the statewide ban on professional mixed martial arts, and I thank the Assembly for finally joining us in this fight."

This legislation now must be approved by the Governor, who has already expressed his support for legalizing MMA in his proposed budget earlier this year. By allowing professional MMA competitions in the state, a 2013 economic impact study estimated that these events could 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.

Most importantly, however, Senator Griffo noted that this legislation would ensure greater safety measures for combative fighters in NY by providing the same oversight as other professional sports through the New York State Athletic Commission.

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 this competitive fighting continues to grow in popularity all across North America, it made absolutely no sense to maintain New York's status as the only state that bans professional MMA," Senator Griffo added. "Fans could watch it anytime on TV or attend the

events in other states, and our own up-and-coming fighters would be limited to amateur competitions in New York that did not always guarantee the safest conditions for athletes and spectators. These athletes and their fans deserve better in New York, and I'm glad we can finally give them that opportunity."

Senator Griffo also thanked Assemblyman Joseph Morelle, D-Irondequoit, for his persistence as companion sponsor in bringing this bill to the Assembly for its long-awaited vote.

"This long-standing ban served no purpose but to put New York at a disadvantage on every level in the MMA arena – athletes were deprived of the honor and safety they deserved, fans were deprived of the enjoyment they demanded and communities were deprived of the economic benefit that would come from hosting these events," Senator Griffo said. "I commend Assemblyman Morelle for recognizing how important this opportunity is to our state and its dedicated fighters, and I thank him for his support in leading this bill through the legislative process."

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2015-S5949A**

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- 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?