

To: House Committee on Regulatory Reform

From: Anne Morrell, MMA Commission Member, Michigan Unarmed Combat Commission

Date: May 14, 2024

Re: HB 5156

Position: Support

Chairman Carter and members of the committee, my name is Anne Morrell. I'm a member of the Michigan Unarmed Combat Commission, serving as an MMA commissioner and member of the Rules Committee. I have been active in unarmed combat sports for 20 years as a judge, matchmaker, fight coordinator, and event planner/supervisor. I'm pleased to see this committee considering HB 5156.

The bill, most importantly, will position Michigan's unarmed combat sports in alignment with the rest of the country and globally by focusing on the oversight of the commission to assign event officials instead of the promoters themselves and concentrate on cataclysmic injuries from unarmed combat sports.

Not only does Bill 5156 align us with the rest of the country, but it also opens the market to attract credible national promotions and reputable teams to Michigan. This also brings economic benefits to the local communities by revenue generation with ticket sales and hotel bookings, with an average increase in hotel occupancy rate of 20% by hosting events, local visitor spending, and enhancing our state's image and branding. Not only would the local community benefit, but the state would as well, with an increase in revenue from new events, licenses, and TV broadcast contracts, to name a few.

As an example of what unarmed combat events can do for the state, according to the UFC, this past April, they made a record-setting \$47.7 Million economic impact for their event in Miami, with almost \$23.7 Million in direct spending benefitting the Miami metropolitan area and a record gate grossing \$11.9 Million of a crowd of over 19,000 in attendance for a championship.

In summary, House Bill 5156 will improve Michigan's status and encourage the growth of other unarmed combat events in the state, increasing revenue and overall economic impact. I appreciate the committee's consideration of this bill. I appreciate the committee's consideration of this bill. Committee members with questions can contact LARA's Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs at LARA-LegislativeContact@michigan.gov.