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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2009

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A N A C T

RELATING TO SPORTS RACING AND ATHLETICS – MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Introduced By: Senators Ruggerio, Ciccone, McBurney, Doyle, and Tassoni

Date Introduced: February 25, 2009

Referred To: Senate Constitutional & Regulatory Issues

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 41 of the General Laws entitled "SPORTS, RACING, AND
2 ATHLETICS" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 5.2

4 MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

5 **41-5.2-1. Definitions.** – Terms used in this chapter shall be construed as follows:

6 (1) "Choke holds" means any hold that impairs the flow of blood or oxygen to the brain.

7 There are many chokes including the rear naked choke, the guillotine, and the triangle choke;

8 (2) "Cut man" means the person who helps stop the flow of blood from a fighter's cuts by
9 applying coagulants;

10 (3) "Eye gouge" means digging the fingers in and around the opponent's eye;

11 (4) "Fishhook" means hooking the fingers into an opponent's mouth, nostrils, or ears and
12 pulling at them;

13 (5) "Foot stomps" means stomping on the opponent's feet trying to damage the instep and
14 fragile foot bones;

15 (6) "Gi" is the Japanese term for martial arts uniform;

16 (7) "Guard position" means the position where a fighter is on his back with his opponent
17 between his legs. While this is primarily a defensive position, many submission holds are
18 possible;

19 (8) "Head-butt" means using the head to strike the opponent;

1 (9) "Joint-lock" means and includes all locks, bars, and holds, that cause enough pain to
2 cause an opponent to submit. Many of these holds can result in serious injury if the opponent does
3 not tap out in time. A few popular submission holds are arm bars, ankle locks, knee bars, and
4 neck cranks;

5 (10) "KO" means knock out. A fighter is knocked down and unconscious;

6 (11) "Mixed martial arts" means an event that describes the convergence of techniques
7 from a variety of combative sports disciplines including boxing, wrestling, judo, jujitsu,
8 kickboxing, and others;

9 (12) "Mount position" means a dominant position where a fighter straddles his opponent
10 on the ground;

11 (13) "Mouse" means a dark swollen bruise around the eye;

12 (14) "Neck crank" means any hold that impairs the flow of blood or oxygen to the brain.
13 There are many chokes including the rear naked choke, the guillotine, and the triangle choke;

14 (15) "NHB" is a term also referred to as "no holds barred" which refers to fighting
15 contests with few rules;

16 (16) "Reversal" means switching from being in a disadvantageous position to a superior
17 one;

18 (17) "Submission" means when a fighter signals surrender due to a submission hold,
19 choke, or from strikes. The fighter can tap the mat three (3) times or submit verbally;

20 (18) "Submission holds" means and includes all locks, bars, and holds that cause enough
21 pain to cause an opponent to submit. Many of these holds can result in serious injury if the
22 opponent does not tap out in time;

23 (19) "Takedown" means and usually occurs when a grappler takes his opponent to the
24 ground;

25 (20) "Weigh in" means and is used to determine a fighter's official weight for the bout
26 and is held up to twenty-four (24) hours prior to the event.

27 **41-5.2-2. Division of racing and athletics.** – Mixed martial arts exhibitions shall be
28 subject to the authority, supervision and control of the Rhode Island department of business
29 regulation – division of racing and athletics as set forth and defined in chapter 41-5, except those
30 of section 41-5-12.

31 **41-5.2-3. Mixed martial arts uniform rules -- Weightclasses.** – (a) Mixed martial
32 artists shall be divided into the following classes:

33 (1) Flyweight under 125.9 pounds;

34 (2) Bantamweight 126 lbs. – 134.9 pounds;

- 1 (3) Featherweight 135 lbs – 145 pounds;
- 2 (4) Lightweight over 145 lbs to 155 pounds;
- 3 (5) Welterweight over 155 lbs to 170 pounds;
- 4 (6) Middleweight over 170 lbs to 185 pounds;
- 5 (7) Light heavyweight over 185 lbs to 205 pounds;
- 6 (8) Heavyweight over 205 lbs to 265 pounds; and
- 7 (9) Super heavyweight over 265 pounds.

8 **41-5.2-4. Uniform rules -- Fighting area.** – (a) The fighting area canvas shall be no
9 smaller than eighteen feet (18') by eighteen feet (18') and no larger than thirty-two feet (32') by
10 thirty-two feet (32'). The fighting area canvas shall be padded in a manner as approved by the
11 commissioner, with at least a one inch layer of foam padding. Padding shall extend beyond the
12 fighting area and over the edge of the platform. No vinyl or other plastic rubberized covering
13 shall be permitted.

14 (b) The fighting area canvas shall not be more than four feet (4') above the floor of the
15 building and shall have suitable steps or ramps for use by the participants. Posts shall be made of
16 metal not more than six inches (6") in diameter, extending from the floor of the building to a
17 minimum height of fifty-eight inches (58") above the fighting area canvas and shall be properly
18 padded in a manner approved by the commissioner.

19 (c) The fighting area canvas area shall be enclosed by a fence made of such material as
20 will not allow a fighter to fall out or break through it onto the floor or spectators, including, but
21 not limited to, vinyl coated chain link fencing. All metal parts shall be covered and padded in a
22 manner approved by the commission and shall not be abrasive to the contestants.

23 (d) The fence shall provide two (2) separate entries onto the fighting area canvas.

24 (e) A ring stool of a type approved by the commissioner shall be available for each
25 contestant.

26 (f) An appropriate number of stools or chairs, of a type approved by the commissioner,
27 shall be available to each contestant's seconds. Such stools or chairs shall be located near each
28 contestant's corner.

29 (g) All stools and chairs used must be thoroughly cleaned or replaced after the conclusion
30 of each bout.

31 (h) For each bout, the promoter shall provide a clean water bucket and a clean plastic
32 water bottle in each corner.

33 **41-5.2-5. Uniform rules -- Hand bandage specifications.** – (a) In all weight classes, the
34 bandages on each contestant's hand shall be restricted to soft gauze cloth not more than thirteen

1 (13) yards in length and two inches (2") in width, held in place by not more than ten feet (10') of
2 surgeon's tape, one inch in width, for each hand.

3 (b) Surgeon's adhesive tape shall be placed directly on each hand for protection near the
4 wrist. The tape may cross the back of the hand twice and extend to cover and protect the knuckles
5 when the hand is clenched to make a fist.

6 (c) The bandages shall be evenly distributed across the hand.

7 (d) Bandages and tape shall be placed on the contestant's hands in the dressing room in
8 the presence of the inspector.

9 (e) Under no circumstances are gloves to be placed on the hands of a contestant until the
10 approval of the inspector is received.

11 **41-5.2-6. Uniform rules -- Mouth pieces.** – (a) All contestants are required to wear a
12 mouthpiece during competition. The mouthpiece shall be subject to examination and approval by
13 the attending physician.

14 (b) The round cannot begin without the mouthpiece in place.

15 (c) If the mouthpiece is involuntarily dislodged during competition, the referee shall call
16 time at the first opportune moment, without interfering with the immediate action and the
17 mouthpiece shall be cleaned and reinserted.

18 **41-5.2-7. Uniform rules -- Protective equipment.** – (a) Male mixed martial artists shall
19 wear a groin protector of their own selection, and of a type approved by the commissioner.

20 (b) Female mixed martial artists are prohibited from wearing groin protectors.

21 (c) Female mixed martial artists shall wear a chest protector during competition. The
22 chest protector shall be subject to the approval of the commissioner.

23 **41-5.2-8. Uniform rules -- Gloves.** – (a) The gloves shall be new for all main events and
24 in good condition or they must be replaced.

25 (b) All contestants shall wear either four (4), five (5), or six (6) ounce gloves, supplied by
26 the promoter and approved by the commissioner. No contestant shall supply his/her own gloves
27 for participation.

28 **41-5.2-9. Uniform rules -- Apparel.** – (a) Each contestant shall wear mixed martial arts
29 shorts, biking shorts, or kick-boxing shorts.

30 (b) Gi's or shirts are prohibited during competition.

31 (c) Shoes are prohibited during competition.

32 **41-5.2-10. Uniform rules -- Appearance.** – (a) Hair shall be trimmed or tied back in
33 such a manner as not to interfere with the vision of either contestant or cover any part of a
34 contestant's face.

1 (b) Jewelry or piercing accessories are prohibited during competition.

2 **41-5.2-11. Uniform rules -- Round length.** – (a) Each non-championship mixed martial
3 arts contest shall be three (3) rounds of five (5) minutes duration, with one minute rest period
4 between each round.

5 (b) Each championship mixed martial arts contest shall be five (5) rounds of five (5)
6 minutes duration, with a one minute rest period between each round.

7 **41-5.2-12. Uniform rules - Stopping a contest.** – The referee and ringside physician are
8 the sole arbiters of a bout and are the only individuals authorized to enter the fighting area at any
9 time during competition and authorized to stop a contest.

10 **41-5.2-13. Uniform rules -- Judging.** – (a) All bouts will be evaluated and scored by
11 three (3) judges.

12 (b) The ten (10) point must system will be the standard system of scoring a bout. Under
13 the ten (10) point must scoring system, ten (10) points must be awarded to the winner of the
14 round and nine (9) points or less must be awarded to the loser, except for a rare even round,
15 which is scored (10-10).

16 (c) Judges shall evaluate mixed martial arts techniques, such as effective striking,
17 effective grappling, control of the fighting area, effective aggressiveness and defense.

18 (d) Evaluations shall be made in the order in which the techniques appear in (c) above,
19 giving the most weight in scoring to effective striking, effective grappling, control of the fighting
20 area and effective aggressiveness and defense.

21 (e) Effective striking is judged by determining the total number of legal heavy strikes
22 landed by a contestant.

23 (f) Effective grappling is judged by considering the amount of successful executions of a
24 legal takedown or reversals. Examples of factors to consider are takedowns from standing
25 position to mount position, passing the guard to mount position, and bottom position fighters
26 using an active, threatening guard.

27 (g) Fighting area control is judged by determining who is dictating the pace, location and
28 position of the fight. Examples of factors to consider are countering a grappler's attempt at
29 takedown by remaining standing and legally striking; taking down an opponent to force a ground
30 fight; creating threatening submission attempts and passing the guard to achieve mount, and
31 creating striking opportunities.

32 (h) Effective aggressiveness means moving forward and landing a legal strike.

33 (i) Effective defense means avoiding being struck, taken down or reversed while
34 countering with offensive attacks.

1 (j) The following objective scoring criteria shall be utilized by the judges when scoring a
2 round:

3 (1) A round is to be scored as a 10-10 round when both contestants appear to be fighting
4 evenly and neither contestant shows clear dominance in a round;

5 (2) A round is to be scored as a 10-9 round when a contestant wins by a close margin,
6 landing the greater number of effective legal strikes, grappling and other maneuvers;

7 (3) A round is to be scored as a 10-8 round when a contestant overwhelmingly dominates
8 by striking or grappling in a round;

9 (4) A round is to be scored as a 10-7 round when a contestant totally dominates by
10 striking or grappling in the round.

11 (k) Judges shall use a sliding scale and recognize the length of time the fighters are either
12 standing or on the ground, as follows:

13 (1) If the mixed martial artists spent a majority of a round on the canvas, then:

14 (i) Effective grappling is weighed first; and

15 (ii) Effective striking is then weighed.

16 (2) If the mixed martial artists spent a majority of a round standing, then:

17 (i) Effective striking is weighed first; and

18 (ii) Effective grappling is then weighed.

19 (3) If a round ends with a relatively even amount of standing and canvas fighting, striking
20 and grappling are weighed equally.

21 **41-5.2-14. Warnings.** – (a) The referee shall issue a single warning for the following
22 infractions. After the initial warning, if the prohibited conduct persists, a penalty will be issued.
23 The penalty may result in a deduction of points or disqualification.

24 (1) Holding or grabbing the fence;

25 (2) Holding opponent's shorts or gloves; or

26 (3) The presence of more than one second on the fighting area perimeter.

27 **41-5.2-15. Fouls.** – (a) The following are fouls and will result in penalties if committed:

28 (1) Butting with the head;

29 (2) Eye gouging of any kind;

30 (3) Biting or spitting at an opponent;

31 (4) Hair pulling;

32 (5) Fish hooking;

33 (6) Groin attacks of any kind;

34 (7) Intentionally placing a finger in any orifice of the opponent;

- 1 (8) Downward pointing of elbow strikes;
- 2 (9) Small joint manipulation;
- 3 (10) Strikes to the spine or back of the head;
- 4 (11) Heel kicks to the kidney;
- 5 (12) Throat strikes of any kind;
- 6 (13) Clawing, pinching, twisting the flesh or grabbing the clavicle;
- 7 (14) Kicking the head of a grounded fighter;
- 8 (15) Kneeing the head of a grounded fighter;
- 9 (16) Stomping of a grounded fighter;
- 10 (17) The use of abusive language in the fighting area;
- 11 (18) Any unsportsmanlike conduct that causes an injury to opponent;
- 12 (19) Attacking an opponent on or during the break;
- 13 (20) Attacking an opponent who is under the referee's care at the time;
- 14 (21) Timidity (avoiding contact, or consistent dropping of mouthpiece, or faking an
- 15 injury);
- 16 (22) Interference from a mixed martial artist's seconds;
- 17 (23) Throwing an opponent out of the fighting area;
- 18 (24) Flagrant disregard of the referee's instructions;
- 19 (25) Spiking an opponent to the canvas on his or her head or neck.
- 20 (b) Disqualification occurs after any combination of three (3) of the fouls listed in
- 21 subdivision (a) above or after a referee determines that a foul was intentional and flagrant.
- 22 (c) Fouls will result in a point being deducted by the official scorekeeper from the
- 23 offending mixed martial artist's score.
- 24 (d) Only a referee may assess a foul. If the referee does not call the foul, judges shall not
- 25 make that assessment on their own and may not factor such into their scoring calculations.
- 26 (e) A fouled fighter has up to five (5) minutes to recuperate.
- 27 (f) If a foul is committed, the referee shall:
- 28 (1) call time;
- 29 (2) check the fouled mixed martial artist's condition and safety; and
- 30 (3) assess the foul to the offending contestant, deduct points, and notify each corner's
- 31 seconds, judges and official scorekeeper.
- 32 (g) If a bottom contestant commits a foul, unless the top contestant is injured, the fight
- 33 shall continue, so as not to jeopardize the top contestant's superior positioning at the time.
- 34 (1) The referee shall verbally notify the bottom contestant of the foul.

1 (2) When the round is over, the referee shall assess the foul and notify both corners'
2 seconds, the judges and the official scorekeeper.

3 (3) The referee may terminate a bout based on the severity of a foul. For such a flagrant
4 foul, a contestant shall lose by disqualification.

5 **41-5.2-16. Injuries sustained during competition.** – (a) If an injury sustained during
6 competition as a result of a legal maneuver is severe enough to terminate a bout, the injured
7 contestant loses by technical knockout.

8 (b) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul is severe
9 enough to terminate the bout, the contestant causing the injury loses by disqualification.

10 (c) If an injury is sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul and the
11 bout is allowed to continue, the referee shall notify the scorekeeper to automatically deduct two
12 (2) points from the contestant who committed the foul.

13 (d) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an intentional foul causes the
14 injured contestant to be unable to continue at a subsequent point in the contest, the injured
15 contestant shall win by technical decision, if he or she is ahead on the score cards. If the injured
16 contestant is even or behind on the score cards at the time of stoppage, the outcome of the bout
17 shall be declared a technical draw.

18 (e) If a contestant injures himself or herself while attempting to foul his or her opponent,
19 the referee shall take any action in his or her favor, and the injury shall be treated in the same
20 manner as an injury produced by a fair blow.

21 (f) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an accidental foul is severe
22 enough for the referee to stop the bout immediately, the bout shall result in a no contest if stopped
23 before two (2) rounds have been completed in a three (3) round bout or if stopped before three (3)
24 rounds have been completed in a five (5) round bout.

25 (g) If an injury sustained during competition as a result of an accidental foul is severe
26 enough for the referee to stop the bout immediately, the bout shall result in a technical decision
27 awarded to the contestant who is ahead on the score cards at the time the bout is stopped only
28 when the bout is stopped after two (2) rounds of the three (3) round bout, or three (3) rounds of a
29 five (5) round bout have been completed.

30 (h) There will be no scoring of an incomplete round. However, if the referee penalizes
31 either contestant, then the appropriate points shall be deducted when the scorekeeper calculates
32 the final score.

33 **41-5.2-17. Types of bout results.** – (a) The following are the types of bout results:

34 (1) Submission by:

- 1 (i) Tap out: When a contestant physically uses his/her hand to indicate that he or she no
2 longer wishes to continue; or
- 3 (ii) Verbal tap out: When a contestant verbally announces to the referee that he or she
4 does not wish to continue;
- 5 (2) Technical knockout by:
- 6 (i) Referee stops bout;
- 7 (ii) Ringside physician stops bout; or
- 8 (iii) When an injury as a result of a legal maneuver is severe enough to terminate a bout;
- 9 (3) Knockout by failure to rise from the canvas;
- 10 (4) Decision via score cards:
- 11 (i) Unanimous: When all three (3) judges score the bout for the same contestant;
- 12 (ii) Split decision: When two (2) judges score the bout for one contestant and one judge
13 scores for the opponent; or
- 14 (iii) Majority decision: When two (2) judges score the bout for the same contestant and
15 one judge scores a draw.
- 16 (5) Draws:
- 17 (i) Unanimous – When all three (3) judges score the bout a draw;
- 18 (ii) Majority – When two (2) judges score the bout a draw; or
- 19 (iii) Split – When all three (3) judges score differently and the score total results in a
20 draw.
- 21 (6) Disqualification: When an injury sustained during competition as a result of an
22 intentional foul is severe enough to terminate the contest.
- 23 (7) Forfeit: When a contestant fails to begin competition or prematurely ends the contest
24 for reasons other than injury or by indicating a tap out.
- 25 (8) Technical draw: When an injury sustained during competition as a result of an
26 intentional foul causes an injured contestant to be unable to continue and the injured contestant is
27 even or behind on the score cards at the time of stoppage.
- 28 (9) Technical decision. When the bout is prematurely stopped due to injury and a
29 contestant is leading on the score cards; and
- 30 (10) No contest: When a contest is prematurely stopped due to accidental injury and a
31 sufficient number of rounds have not been completed to render a decision via the score cards.

32 SECTION 2. Section 41-5-21 of the General Laws in Chapter 41-5 entitled "Boxing and
33 Wrestling" is hereby amended to read as follows:

34 **41-5-21. Application of chapter to wrestling and kickboxing matches** Application of

1 **chapter to wrestling, kickboxing and mixed martial arts matches.** -- (a) The division of racing
2 and athletics shall have and exercise the same authority, supervision, and control over wrestling,
3 ~~and~~ kickboxing and mixed martial arts as defined in section 41-5.2-1 matches and exhibitions as
4 is conferred upon the division by this chapter over boxing and sparring matches and exhibitions,
5 and the provisions of this chapter, except those of section 41-5-12, shall apply in all respects to
6 wrestling, ~~and~~ kickboxing and mixed martial arts matches and exhibitions to the same extent and
7 with the same force and effect as they apply to boxing and sparring matches.

8 (b) Whenever in this chapter, except in section 41-5-12, the words "boxing or sparring
9 match or exhibition" or the plural form thereof are used, they shall be construed to include the
10 words "wrestling, ~~or~~ kickboxing or mixed martial arts match or exhibition" or the plural form
11 thereof, and the word "boxer" shall be construed to include "wrestler, ~~or~~ kickboxer, or mixed
12 martial arts contestant," unless the context otherwise requires, and any person holding,
13 conducting, or participating in a wrestling, ~~or~~ kickboxing or mixed martial arts match or
14 exhibition shall be subject to the same duties, liabilities, licensing requirements, penalties, and
15 fees as are imposed by this chapter upon any person holding, conducting, or participating in a
16 boxing or sparring match or exhibition.

17 (c) For the purpose of this chapter a "professional wrestler" is defined as one who
18 competes for a money prize or teaches or pursues or assists in the practice of wrestling as a means
19 of obtaining a livelihood or pecuniary gain; and a "professional kickboxer" is defined as one who
20 competes for a money prize or teaches or pursues or assists in the practice of kickboxing as a
21 means of obtaining a livelihood or pecuniary gain; and a "mixed martial arts contestant" is
22 defined as one who competes for a money prize or teaches or pursues or assists in the practice of
23 mixed martial arts as a means of obtaining a livelihood or pecuniary gain.

24 (d) The division of racing and athletics may waive the provisions of this chapter within
25 its discretion in the case of wrestling as a form of pre-determined entertainment.

26 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO SPORTS RACING AND ATHLETICS – MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

1 This act would permit mixed martial arts matches in Rhode Island and provides the rules,
2 regulations and guidelines for such matches.

3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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