

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1952

By: Representative Hawk

By: Senator J. Dismang

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO ASSIST THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION TO CONTINUE ITS MISSION TO PROMOTE A ROBUST, HEALTHY, AND SAFE COMBATIVE SPORTS INDUSTRY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO ASSIST THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION TO CONTINUE ITS MISSION TO PROMOTE A ROBUST, HEALTHY, AND SAFE COMBATIVE SPORTS INDUSTRY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 17-22-101(3), concerning definitions pertaining to combative sporting events, is amended to read as follows:

(3)(A) “Combative sports” means boxing, kick boxing, wrestling, professional wrestling, martial arts, Muay Thai, or any combination thereof, or any form of hand-to-hand, elbow-and-foot, or foot-and-leg competition in which:

(i) A blow is struck which may reasonably be expected to inflict injury; or

(ii) A surface for fighting is used that may reasonably be expected to inflict injury.

(B) “Combative sports” does not include student training or



an exhibition of a student's skill when:

- (i) Conducted by a martial arts school or an association of martial arts schools;
 - (ii) The student's participation is for health and recreational purposes rather than competition;
 - (iii) The intent is to use only partial contact; and
 - (iv) The scoring technique is based only on points.
- ~~(C) "Combative sports" does not include professional wrestling;~~

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 17-22-204(a), concerning the authority of the State Athletic Commission, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1)(A) The State Athletic Commission shall have the sole discretion, management, control, and jurisdiction over all combative sports matches and exhibitions in this state.

~~(B)(i)~~ The commission shall adopt uniform policies, fees, and forms to ensure fair regulation of the combative sports industry.

~~(ii) The commission shall have no authority over professional wrestling events.~~

(2) A combative sports match or exhibition declared to be amateur and self-regulated shall be governed by the commission unless sanctioned by:

(A) A federally recognized sanctioning body approved in writing by the commission; and

(B) A national oversight body with 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) status under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 operating in at least six (6) states approved in writing by the commission.

(3) A professional wrestling event with one thousand five hundred (1,500) or more attendees shall be governed by the commission.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 17-22-302(f), concerning the training and certification of referees and judges for professional combative sports events, is amended to read as follows:

(f)(1) A referee or judge for professional events shall attend training courses given by and obtain certification from the Association of Boxing Commissions or other sanctioned organization approved by the State Athletic Commission for the referee or judge's discipline.

(2) A referee or judge may take the courses provided by the Association of Boxing Commissions or other sanctioned organization approved by the State Athletic Commission anywhere in the United States if documentation of training and certification is provided upon application for a license.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 17-22-306(a), concerning fees for combative sports events, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1) Within five (5) business days after a combative sports match or exhibition, the licensed manager, promoter, or person responsible for the match or exhibition shall furnish to the State Athletic Commission a written report under the penalty of perjury on a form that shall be provided by the commission showing the number of tickets or subscriptions for physical admission that were issued or sold and the gross receipts therefor without any deductions whatsoever.

(2)(A) The person shall also pay to the commission at the same time a five-percent fee of the total gross receipts received from admission charges for each match or exhibition held under the authority of this chapter.

(B) The five percent (5%) shall be computed using gross gate receipts, unless the venue collects and remits sales tax for the promoter.

(C) If the venue collects and remits sales tax for the promoter, the five percent (5%) shall be computed on the net gate receipts after sales tax.

(D)(i) If a promoter allows admission to a match or exhibition in return for a payment other than the cash purchase of tickets, the commission shall:

(a) Determine the method to be used to calculate the five-percent value of the gate receipts; or

(b) Set a reasonable price per person to be paid by the promoter to the commission.

(ii) If the promoter requests a decision from the commission regarding the payment under this section before the match or exhibition, the commission shall make the determination and notify the promoter of the determination before the match or exhibition.

(3)(A) The promoter shall pay:

(i) Pay all costs of the cost of an event inspector or investigator present at the event; and

(ii) Reimburse all costs of the commission for the event, including without limitation:

(a) The cost of each event inspector or investigator not to exceed one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) per day for each inspector or investigator;

(b) Per diem, expenses, and travel reimbursements authorized under § 17-22-204 and § 25-16-901 et seq.;

(c) The event permit processing fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00) authorized under § 17-22-302; and

(d) The national and federal fighter database fees charged to the commission under § 17-22-206.

~~(B) The Except as provided under subdivision (a)(3)(D) of this section, the cost of the event inspector or investigator shall not exceed one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125) per day for each inspector or investigator.~~

(C) The commission shall:

(i) Determine if there is a need to appoint an inspector or investigator at an event;

(ii) Determine the number of inspectors or investigators to be appointed for the event; and

(iii) Notify the promoter in writing before the event of:

(a) The number of inspectors or investigators to be appointed;

(b) The cost of the inspectors or investigators; and

(c) The reasons for the appointment.

(D) [Repealed.]