

HCS HB 1388 -- CERTAIN SPORTS CONTESTS

SPONSOR: Gregory

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 8 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Administrative Oversight Committee by a vote of 11 to 2.

This bill adds amateur kickboxing and amateur mixed martial arts to the list of contests the Division of Professional Registration, within the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration has the authority to regulate. The bill requires that all contestants, other than amateur kickboxing contestants, be at least 18 years old and that all promoters provide a surety bond or irrevocable letter of credit before receiving a license. The bill also prohibits and restricts the use of certain strikes in amateur mixed martial arts.

This bill removes the requirement that announcer and managers of professional boxing, sparring, professional wrestling, professional kickboxing, and professional full-contact karate be licensed by the division.

This bill is similar to HB 1156 (2017).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the purpose of this bill is to protect children that are currently participating in amateur MMA competitions. The current sanctioning bodies are not doing enough to protect these kids. MMA has the potential to cause serious and permanent injuries. There need to be some basic safeguards in place and this bill allows the Office of Athletics within the Division of Professional Registration to institute and enforce them.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Gregory; T. Ryan Sutton; and Jesse Runey.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say other potentially dangerous sports like amateur boxing are regulated at a national level. This bill would allow the office of athletics to institute the same type of protections for amateur MMA. We already regulate professional MMA but there are no protections for the children who are currently participating in amateur competitions.

Testifying on the bill was Tim Lueckenhoff, Office of Athletics.