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**Business & Financial Services Committee**

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**HB 2301**

**Brief Description:** Concerning boxing, martial arts, and wrestling.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Green, Kirby, Pettigrew, Condotta and Jinkins.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Modifies exemptions regarding amateurs and amateur events.
- Requires licensing of training facilities, amateur sanctioning organizations, and amateur martial arts participants by the Department of Licensing.
- Extends the scope of regulation in boxing, wrestling and martial arts from professional to include amateurs.

**Hearing Date:** 1/17/12

**Staff:** Jon Hedegard (786-7127).

**Background:**

The Department of Licensing (DOL) regulates boxing, martial arts, kickboxing, and wrestling events. Federal law requires boxing events, including events on tribal lands, to be supervised by a regulatory entity. Under the federal law, the DOL must have an agreement with a tribe to regulate a tribe's boxing events. A tribe may also have its own regulatory entity if the entity meets minimum federal standards.

"Martial arts" is defined as means "a type of boxing including sumo, judo, karate, kung fu, tae kwon do, pankration, muay thai, or other forms of full-contact martial arts or self-defense conducted on a full-contact basis where weapons are not used and the participants utilize kicks, punches, blows, or other techniques with the intent not to injure or disable an opponent, but to defeat an opponent or win by decision, knockout, technical knockout, or submission."

Licensure.

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Boxers, kickboxers, martial arts participants, promoters, inspectors, and others involved with the events must obtain a license from the DOL unless exempt. The DOL's ability to impose certain sanctions is dependent on whether or not events charge an admission fee.

#### Existing Licensing Exemptions.

There are a number of different exemptions from licensure in statute. All boxing, kickboxing, martial arts, or wrestling events are exempt if the event is:

- conducted by any common school, college, or university and all the participating contestants are bona fide students; or
- an entirely amateur event, as defined, that is promoted on a nonprofit basis or for charitable purposes.

An amateur event is defined as an event in which all the participants are amateurs who are registered and sanctioned by: (1) the United States Amateur Boxing, Inc.; (2) the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association; (3) the National Collegiate Athletic Association; (4) the Amateur Athletic Union; (5) the Golden Gloves of America; (6) the United Full Contact Federation; (7) any similar organization recognized by the DOL as exclusively or primarily dedicated to advancing the sport of amateur boxing, kickboxing, or martial arts; or (8) the local affiliate of any above organization.

Licensing requirements also do not apply to contestants or participants in events:

- at which only amateurs are engaged in contests;
- held and promoted by fraternal organizations or veterans' organizations chartered by Congress or the United States Department of Defense or any recognized amateur sanctioning body recognized by the DOL; and
- where all funds are used primarily for the benefit of the members of the promoting organization.

#### **Summary of Bill:**

##### Definitions.

The definitions of "event," "promoter," and "amateur event" are modified.

"Training facility" is defined as a facility that offers training in one or more of the martial arts and holds exhibitions in which all the participants are amateurs and where an admission fee is charged.

##### Licensure.

Training facilities, amateur sanctioning organizations, and amateur boxing, martial arts, and wrestling martial arts participants must be licensed by the DOL. Licensure is not be required if the participant meets an exception from licensing.

The DOL may establish licensing standards.

##### Exemptions.

The exemption for entirely amateur events is modified. Language exempting charitable or nonprofit events is struck. All events that meet the definition of an amateur event are exempt

except for events that are recognized and sanctioned by an amateur sanctioning organization that is licensed and approved by the DOL.

The exemption for contestants or participants in events between amateurs engaged in contests held and promoted by fraternal organizations or veterans' organizations chartered by Congress or the United States Department of Defense or any recognized amateur sanctioning body recognized by the DOL and where all funds are used primarily for the benefit of the members of the promoting organization is modified. The exemption excludes an event held by an amateur sanctioning body. Language regarding the use of funds is struck.

Events that are held by the United Full Contact Federation or any similar amateur sanctioning organization exclusively or primarily dedicated to advancing the sport of amateur boxing, kickboxing, or martial arts may be an amateur event but are not exempt from the chapter. Events held by the United Full Contact Federation or any similar amateur sanctioning organization require licensure for the sanctioning body, the promoter, officials, and the participants.

#### Scope of Regulation.

In a number of places throughout the bill, the scope of regulation is extended from professional to include amateurs including:

- the definition of promoter;
- the standards of conduct that may be adopted by the Director;
- various acts that are considered unprofessional conduct, including disciplinary actions by regulatory authorities, violations of statutes or rules regarding athletics, aiding and abetting an unlicensed person to act in a manner that requires a license, and misrepresentation or fraud in an event.

A prohibited practice regarding sham or fake events is expanded from boxing events to any professional or amateur boxing, wrestling, or martial arts match or exhibition.

Adequate security requirements are expanded from boxing and wrestling events to also include martial arts events.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 11, 2012.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.