



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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CLARIFY BOXING AND WRESTLING PROFESSIONS

**House Bill 5436 (Substitute H-1)
First Analysis (6-5-90)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Gerald H. Law
Committee: State Affairs**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

There are four wrestling styles: freestyle, Greco-Roman, scholastic (or folkstyle), and professional. The first two styles are performed at Olympic games. The scholastic, or folkstyle, is taught in high schools and colleges in the United States. Professional wrestling matches are those performed for prizes, or for which an admission fee is charged. They are regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulation and are classified in the Occupational Code under the same category as boxing and sparring. However, it has been pointed out that wrestling has evolved in this country to the level of entertainment, rather than that of competitive sports, since, in wrestling exhibitions, the participants either are not required to use their best efforts to win, or else the winner has been agreed upon by the participants before the performance. It is also pointed out that in wrestling, unlike boxing, there are very few injuries involved. Since there are few professional wrestling organizations in Michigan (most "matches" are one night events at county fairs), some feel that reference to the sport should be removed from the code.

In addition, boxers who test positive for the presence of drugs may currently be suspended by the department under the authority of its administrative rules. On the attorney general's advice, the department has requested that these suspension procedures be included in the code.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Occupational Code to delete wrestling from its licensing requirements, to revise archaic language, and to require suspension of those boxers who tested positive for the presence of drugs.

Currently, the code lists those injuries or circumstances which, if sustained during a contest, render a boxer ineligible to participate again until examined by a department-approved physician. The bill would add positive testing for the presence of drugs to the list, and would require that the Athletic Board of Control decide when the physician's examination could be performed and the type of physical exam necessary to demonstrate a boxer's fitness to compete again. The board's decision could only be appealed if the right to compete were not restored after the physician had certified that the boxer was fit to compete.

MCL 339.505 et al.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Department of Licensing and Regulation, the bill would have minimal fiscal impact on state funds. The last fiscal year for which figures are available are

1987-88; however, according to the department, there is little variance in these figures from year to year. License fee revenues for wrestling were \$2,390 for that fiscal year, and inspection fees were \$2,160, not including travel expenses. (6-3-90)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would delete an inequity in the licensure process. Since the Occupational Code provides penalties for boxing or wrestling licensees who "participate in sham boxing or wrestling matches," then wrestling, by its very nature, violates the code. For this reason, it makes sense to delete it from the code.

For:

The bill would place in statute the Department of Licensing and Regulation's current procedure on testing for the presence of drugs among professional boxers. Since this procedure has always been a controversial issue, it makes sense to have it specified in the statute.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Licensing and Regulation supports the bill. (5-31-90)

The Michigan Consumers Council has no position on the bill. (6-1-90)

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