

Legislative Analysis



UNARMED COMBAT EVENTS

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House Bill 5156 (H-1) as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Lori Stone

Committee: Regulatory Reform

Complete to 5-17-24

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5156 would amend the Michigan Unarmed Combat Regulatory Act to allow a third-party sanctioning body to sanction a martial arts event in Michigan and to make other changes described below.

Third-party sanctioning body sanctioned events

The bill would allow a **third-party sanctioning body** to apply to the Michigan Unarmed Combat Commission (MUCC), in a form and manner prescribed by the commission, with payment of a nonrefundable \$500 application and event fee, to sanction an **unarmed combat** event in one or more **martial arts**, such as judo, taekwondo, karate, or kempo, in Michigan.

Third-party sanctioning body would mean a person independent of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) and the MUCC that is approved by the MUCC to supervise, conduct, and oversee contests of certain unarmed combat events in Michigan.

Martial art would mean a form of weaponless discipline of combat or self-defense that uses physical skills and coordination and is practiced as a combat sport, subject to the limitations contained in the act and its rules.

Not more than two business days after the event, the third-party sanctioning body would have to report the contest results to LARA for review and to each national contest results database selected by LARA. The body would have to make the contest results available to the MUCC upon request.

The MUCC would have to promulgate rules to implement these provisions, including at least all of the following:

- An evaluation of a third-party sanctioning body.
- Qualifications for approval of a third-party sanctioning body to sanction an unarmed combat event in Michigan.
- Procedures to ensure that an approved third-party sanctioning body complies with all applicable laws.

Licensure of seconds

The act currently requires that individuals be licensed as a referee, judge, matchmaker, or timekeeper before they are allowed to participate in events in those rules. In order to be licensed, applicants must be at least 18 years old, be of good moral character, and satisfy any other applicable requirement.

The bill would add a requirement that *seconds* be licensed by LARA, with the same conditions as described above, to participate in contest or event. The annual license fee would be \$50.

Second would mean an individual who assists a contestant during a contest, such as a *cornerperson*, *cutperson*, or *manager*. It would not include a cutperson who is responsible for preventing and treating damage for both contestants in a contest.

Cornerperson would mean an individual who provides assistance to a contestant before or during a contest, such as wrapping the contestant's hands for fighting or providing water.

Cutperson would mean an individual who prevents and treats physical damage for a contestant for a contest.

Manager would mean an individual who acts in a representative capacity on behalf of a contestant in certain situations related to the contestant's career, such as identifying a contest or event for the contestant to compete in, negotiating terms and pay for a contest or event, or representing the interest of the contestant.

Responsibility for unarmed combat event staff

The act now requires a licensed promoter that presents an unarmed combat event in Michigan to arrange for a referee, judges, timekeeper, and inspector to fulfill various purposes required by the act. The bill would shift this responsibility to the MUCC. In addition, it would provide that a manager, promoter, matchmaker, trainer, second, or contestant cannot officiate a contest or event.

Additional licensure requirements

The bill would add a requirement that applicants for a referee, judge, or second license complete a concussion management and treatment program acceptable to LARA, which would have to publish a list of acceptable programs on its website. Applicants for a license renewal would also be required to complete this training at least once every five years.

The bill also would add a requirement that applicants for a referee, judge, or timekeeper license serve in that position for a certain amount of time or number of rounds, as determined by LARA, in amateur-level contests. The minimum experience requirements would have to be posted on LARA's website.

The bill would take effect 180 days after it is enacted.

MCL 338.3610 et seq.

BRIEF DISCUSSION:

According to committee testimony, the bill is intended to modernize the act to be more similar to other states' and to enable unarmed combat sports to grow in Michigan. In particular, supporters argued that the bill would improve safety and eliminate potential conflicts of interest by transferring certain responsibilities from promoters to the MUCC.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 5156 would likely result in both increased costs and revenues for the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.

The department anticipates that costs would be incurred to update information technology (IT) systems to accommodate the new “second” license category and for additional staff time. The department indicated that IT updates typically fall within the \$30,000 to \$100,000 range, depending on the complexity of the required change. The department also anticipates that additional staff time would be required under the changes made by the bill. An additional departmental analyst position (at the top end of the pay and benefits scale) would cost approximately \$140,000, according to the department.

The department would likely realize increased revenue under the bill, stemming from the addition of the second license and fees associated with third-party sanctioned events. Individuals seeking a second license would be responsible for a \$30 application processing fee and a \$50 annual license fee. Third-party sanctioned events would be subject to a \$500 application and event fee. Revenue from both of these fees would be deposited into the Unarmed Combat Fund, which is used, upon appropriation, for the costs of administering and enforcing the Michigan Unarmed Combat Regulatory Act. The magnitude of the revenue would depend on the number of individuals who seek licensure as a second and the number of third-party sanctioned events.

POSITIONS:

Representatives of the following entities testified in support of the bill (4-23-24):

- Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
- Michigan Unarmed Combat Commission

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.