



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0318-2010, **Version:** A

Proposed Res. No. 318-A

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass legislation that would legalize Mixed Martial Arts in the State of New York.

By Council Members Rivera and Williams

Whereas, Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), also known as ultimate fighting, is a full contact combat sport that incorporates various martial arts and other combative sports, such as karate, jiu-jitsu, tae kwon do, boxing, kick-boxing, wrestling and judo; and

Whereas, Unlike other combative sports, the matches occur in an octagon ring enclosed in a cage; and

Whereas, MMA competitions were introduced in the United States with the first Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) in 1993; and

Whereas, MMA has gained popularity in the United States in recent years, which can be attributed to the UFC promoting the sport on pay-per-view, and reality television shows highlighting the sport on cable television networks; and

Whereas, MMA has become one of the most watched sporting events on pay-per-view, rivaling both boxing and professional wrestling; and

Whereas, MMA gained even more recognition when UFC competitors like Roger Huerta appeared on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* and Chuck Liddell appeared on the front of *ESPN The Magazine* in May 2007; and

Whereas, The UFC has also gained international appeal in that UFC programming is now shown in 36 countries, and the UFC plans to continue expanding internationally; and

Whereas, Though initially promoted as brutal, no-holds-barred contests, MMA competitions in the

United States have changed dramatically and now have improved regulations to minimize injury to competitors; and

Whereas, A study by Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine has shown that the overall injury rate in MMA competitions is now similar to other combat sports, including boxing, and that knockout rates are lower in MMA competitions than in boxing; and

Whereas, Senator John McCain, who once led a campaign to ban MMA competitions from cable television, has changed his opinion of the sport as a result of the industry's reforms; and

Whereas, In 2007, Senator McCain stated that, "the rules have been adopted to give its athletes better protections and to ensure fairer competition," according to *SportsPool.com*; and

Whereas, Due to stricter regulations, 44 states have sanctioned the sport, according to a recent article in *USA TODAY*; and

Whereas, Assembly Bill A4146, sponsored by Assembly Member Steven Englebright, and Senate Bill 1707-A, sponsored by State Senator Joseph Griffo, would legalize Mixed Martial Arts competitions and exhibitions in the State of New York; and

Whereas, Such legislation would also establish protocols for combative sports, procedures for applications for licenses, and penalties for violations; and

Whereas, The proposed legislation would also impose taxes on gross receipts of MMA events; and

Whereas, Supporters say that legalizing the sport in New York would contribute millions of dollars to the State and local economy, including positive economic impact on hotels, restaurants and other businesses; and

Whereas, If the New York State Legislature passes such legislation, the UFC plans to hold events at Madison Square Garden, which is projected to generate \$11.5 million in economic activity in New York City; and

Whereas, *USA TODAY* also reported that New York State's Secretary of State, Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez,

supports legalizing MMA and the State's Deputy Secretary of State Joel Barkin, who works with the New York State Athletic Commission, also supports legalizing this sport; and

Whereas, Deputy Secretary Barkin stated that "when regulated, the sport has proven to be very safe;" and

Whereas, Despite opposition by others to legalize Mixed Martial Arts in New York State, the sport has proven to be safer and no more dangerous than other combative sports, has gained mainstream acceptance nationally and internationally, and would provide an economic benefit to the State and City; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass legislation that would legalize Mixed Martial Arts in the State of New York.

LS #1291
3/28/11
10:00 a.m.
TC