

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2388

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, February 26, 2016

Title: An act relating to theatrical wrestling.

Brief Description: Concerning theatrical wrestling.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, MacEwen, Stanford, Rossetti and Bergquist.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/16/16, 89-8.

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 2/24/16, 2/26/16 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Baumgartner, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Ranking Minority Member; Conway, Keiser, King and Warnick.

Staff: Susan Jones (786-7404)

Background: Regulation and Definition. The Department of Licensing (Department) regulates boxing, martial arts, kickboxing, and wrestling events. Wrestling events are defined as a form of sports entertainment in which the participants display their skills in a physical struggle against each other in the ring and either the outcome may be predetermined or the participants do not necessarily strive to win, or both.

Licensure. Wrestlers, boxers, martial arts participants, promoters, and others involved with the events must obtain a license from the Department unless exempt. A license fee is assessed to participants and promoters. The Department currently requires that wrestling event promoters pay an event fee of 6 percent of the gross receipts paid for admission and \$1 per ticket sold for any event held under the promoter license. Events held at a school, college, or university in which all participants are students are exempt from regulation, as are entirely amateur events.

Medical Personnel Requirement. The promoter of a wrestling, boxing, or martial arts event must have an ambulance or paramedical unit on site at the event at the promoter's expense. The Department may require the presence of a physician at a wrestling event and may require the medical examination of a wrestling event participant.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): Licensure and Definitions. A new license is created for a theatrical wrestling school. Theatrical wrestling is defined as the performance of sports entertainment in which: (1) two or more participants work together in a performance of mock combat in a ring for the purpose of entertainment; and (2) the outcome is predetermined; and/or the participants do not necessarily strive to win. A theatrical wrestling school is defined as a facility that offers training in theatrical wrestling. A wrestling event is defined as a demonstration of theatrical wrestling presented to the public.

Wrestling Events. A theatrical wrestling school may hold wrestling shows at the school facility. A school may also hold a limited number of wrestling shows off the school premises. The shows must be for training purposes. Theatrical wrestling schools may charge an admission fee for the shows. These shows may be held without a promoter license. Any wrestling show presented by a theatrical wrestling school must feature at least 80 percent amateur participants. The Department must adopt rules regarding the shows. Wrestling participants engaged in training or a wrestling show at a theatrical wrestling school are exempt from licensure.

Medical Personnel Requirement. Any wrestling show presented by a theatrical wrestling school must have an ambulance or paramedical unit or an emergency medical technician licensed at the event location.

Legislative findings are provided.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY COMMERCE & LABOR COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): Specifies that theatrical wrestling schools may hold wrestling shows without a promoter license; requires a theatrical wrestling school to have medical personnel present at the event location for any theatrical wrestling show; and removes the allowance for a general wrestling promoter to satisfy the medical personnel requirement with an emergency medical technician.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill came about because a neighborhood wanted to put on a wrestling event and it cost a lot of money. This is right-size regulation for the activity. The agency and stakeholders worked on the bill together. There is an amendment that clarifies issue regarding medical personnel. Current law stifles theatrical wrestling and small business. This bill would cut costs and maintain safety. This law exists in other states. The injury risk is akin to ballet or cheerleading rather than mixed martial arts. The goal is to keep the partner as safe as possible.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Zack Hudgins, Prime Sponsor; Stephanie Sams, Dept of Licensing; Jose Gomez, LUCHA LIBRE VOLCANICA; Jake Stratton, Legalize Wrestling; Russell Tupper-Brown, Legalize Wrestling.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.