

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1420

As Reported by House Committee On:
Business & Financial Services

Title: An act relating to theatrical wrestling.

Brief Description: Concerning theatrical wrestling.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, MacEwen and Bergquist.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Business & Financial Services: 2/1/17, 2/7/17 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a theatrical wrestling school license and permits the schools to schedule a limited number of public performances.
- Exempts trainees at a theatrical wrestling school from licensure.
- Requires wrestling show promoters to have an emergency technician present during the wrestling show.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS & FINANCIAL SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Kirby, Chair; Reeves, Vice Chair; Vick, Ranking Minority Member; J. Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Bergquist, Blake, Jenkin, McCabe, Santos and Stanford.

Staff: Robbi Kesler (786-7153).

Background:

The Department of Licensing (Department) regulates boxing, martial arts, kickboxing, and wrestling events. Wrestling events are defined by statute to mean "a form of sports entertainment in which the participants display their skills in a physical struggle against each

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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. The Department currently requires that wrestling event promoters pay a fee equal to 6 percent of the gross receipts for any event held under the promoter license, and a separate license fee is assessed to participants and promoters. Events held at a school, college, or university in which all participants are students are exempt from regulation.

Medical Personnel Requirement.

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

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Licensure.

A new theatrical wrestling school license is created. Licensees may hold a limited number of public events per year (to be determined by the Department), which must feature at least 80 percent amateur participants. Wrestling shows presented by a theatrical wrestling school may charge an admission fee and are not required to obtain a promoter license. Wrestling participants engaged in training or a show at a theatrical wrestling school are exempt from licensure. The Department has rulemaking authority to implement the license.

Medical Personnel Requirement.

Any wrestling show presented by a theatrical wrestling school must have an ambulance, paramedical unit, or medical technician on site at the event.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The provision related to allowing a medical technician to meet the on-site requirement is limited to wrestling shows presented by theatrical wrestling schools. The provision also specifies that wrestling shows presented by theatrical wrestling schools may charge an admission fee without a promoter license.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The current promoter license is costly and time-intensive. A theatrical wrestling school license will allow promoters and students to grow their skills. Although live professional wrestling events are not as common now, theatrical wrestling schools will allow this industry the ability to grow. Theatrical wrestling is very acrobatic and the performers do not try to harm each other, and as such, the regulations should be less burdensome. The current regulations are cost prohibitive for the entire program so it is difficult to put on shows or to be in shows. The current regulations have been too costly for some training schools and promoters. Requiring theatrical wrestlers to conform with boxing and mixed martial arts regulations is burdensome. The regulations should be pared down to the appropriate level for the type of activity that is occurring.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kirby; Jason Stratton, Legalize Wrestling; Josh Kunz; Michael Leveton, Lucha Libre Volcanica; and Tony Sermonti, Department of Licensing.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.