

Current Law

In order to qualify to oversee state-approved amateur mixed martial arts (MMA), third-party Sanctioning Organizations must comply with *health and safety standards* of **all of CHAPTER 8.1** (and the regulations derived from those statutes):

- Pre-fight & ringside physicals for fighters
- Ringside doctor & ambulance at events
- Negative blood tests for HIV, Hepatitis B & Hepatitis C from each fighter
- Health insurance coverage for fighters
- Minimum age requirement (18 years old)
- Fighters' personal risk certification
- Skills match-up determination
- Enumerated medical prohibitions
- Criminal history disclosure & experience verification for officials (e.g., referees, judges, inspectors, timekeepers)
- Requirement for ringside physicians to check substances in possession of trainers, seconds & cut men
- Criteria for minimum ring specifications; equipment provisions; limitations on hand bandaging, topical solutions, etc.
- Detailed rules for the competition style (e.g., full contact, MMA, Muay Thai, etc.)

HB 1228

To act as an official state-approved Amateur MMA Sanctioning Organization, private for-profit entities would need to satisfy *only* those health and safety standards **limited to SECTION 54.1-829.1**:

- Pre-fight & ringside physicals for fighters
- Ringside doctor & ambulance at events
- Negative blood tests for HIV, Hepatitis B & Hepatitis C from each fighter
- ~~▪ Health insurance coverage for fighters~~
- Minimum age requirement (18 years old)
- ~~▪ Fighters' personal risk certification~~
- Skills match-up determination
- ~~▪ Enumerated medical prohibitions~~
- ~~▪ Criminal history disclosure & experience verification for officials (e.g., referees, judges, inspectors, timekeepers)~~
- ~~▪ Requirement for ringside physicians to check substances in possession of trainers, seconds & cut men~~
- ~~▪ Criteria for minimum ring specifications; equipment provisions; limitations on hand bandaging, topical solutions, etc.~~
- ~~▪ Detailed rules for the competition style (e.g., full contact, MMA, Muay Thai, etc.)~~

The General Assembly first decided to regulate amateur MMA just last year—based on the rationale it would promote fighter safety and provide oversight to the “wild west” of a growing industry.

HB 1228 effectively repeals that action, severely reducing safety standards while eliminating any meaningful accountability measures.

Three amateur MMA Sanctioning Organizations applied for and obtained approval since the law became effective Oct. 1, 2015.

No amateur boxing sanctioning bodies sought approval.

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DPOR's concerns are limited to this bill's provisions affecting amateur MMA.