

CHAPTER 36

AN ACT concerning professional wrestling, amending and supplementing P.L.1985, c.83 and amending P.L.1988, c.20.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 1 of P.L.1985, c.83 (C.5:2A-1) is amended to read as follows:

C.5:2A-1 Definitions.

1. As used in this act:
 - a. "Attending physician" means a physician assigned to attend a boxing exhibition or performance pursuant to this act.
 - b. "Board" means the State Athletic Control Board established pursuant to section 3 of this act.
 - c. "Commissioner" means the commissioner appointed pursuant to section 5 of this act.
 - d. "Contest" means an engagement in which the participants strive in good faith to win.
 - e. "Council" means the State Athletic Control Board Medical Advisory Council established pursuant to section 8 of this act.
 - f. "Event" means any occurrence in which a boxer, wrestler, kick boxer or combative sports practitioner displays or exhibits his skills, performs or fights, but does not include professional wrestling except as provided in section 5 of P.L.1997, c.36 (C.5:2A-14.3).
 - g. "Exhibition" means an engagement in which the participants show or display their skills without necessarily striving to win, but does not include professional wrestling except as provided in section 5 of P.L.1997, c.36 (C.5:2A-14.3).
 - h. "Kick boxing or Thai boxing" means any professional sport where the use of hands or feet or other striking techniques are utilized to disable or cause injury to an opponent in a contest, exhibition, or performance.
 - i. "Combative sport" means any professional sport where participants intend to and actually inflict kicks, punches, blows, and other techniques to injure or disable an opponent in a contest, exhibition, or performance.
 - j. "Martial arts" means any discipline where the participants utilize kicks, punches, blows, and other techniques where the intent is not to injure or disable an opponent in a contest, exhibition, or performance.
 - k. "Physician" means an individual licensed to practice medicine and surgery in this State.
 - l. "Promoter" means any person, club, corporation or association, and in the case of a corporate promoter includes any officer, director, employee or stockholder thereof, who produces, arranges or stages any professional boxing, wrestling, kick boxing, or combative sports exhibition, event, performance or contest.
 - m. "Professional wrestling" means an activity in which participants struggle hand-in-hand primarily for the purpose of providing entertainment to spectators rather than conducting a bona fide athletic contest.
 - n. "Wrestling" means a bona fide athletic contest in which participants struggle hand-in-hand with the object of winning by throwing an opponent or scoring points and in which any purpose of providing entertainment is secondary.

2. Section 2 of P.L.1985, c.83 (C.5:2A-2) is amended to read as follows:

C.5:2A-2 Findings, declarations.

2. The Legislature finds and declares to be the public policy of this State that it is in the best interest of the public and of boxing, wrestling, kick boxing and combative sports that boxing, wrestling, kick boxing and combative sports exhibitions, events, performances and contests should be subject to an effective and efficient system of strict control and regulation in order to:
 - a. Protect the safety and well-being of participants in boxing, wrestling, kick boxing and combative sports exhibitions, events, performances and contests; and
 - b. Promote the public confidence and trust in the regulatory process and the conduct of boxing, wrestling, kick boxing and combative sports exhibitions, events, performances and contests.

To further such public confidence and trust, the regulatory provisions of this act are designed

to extend strict State regulation to all persons, practices and associations related to the operation of any boxing, wrestling, kick boxing or combative sports exhibition, event, performance or contest held in this State.

The Legislature further finds and declares that, because its principal purpose is to entertain without injuring or disabling one of the participants, professional wrestling should be excluded from this system of regulation and control.

3. Section 14 of P.L.1985, c. 83 (C.5:2A-14) is amended to read as follows:

C.5:2A-14 Licensure.

14. a. No promoter shall hold or conduct any public boxing, wrestling, kick boxing or combative sports exhibition, event, performance or contest in the State of New Jersey without first having obtained a license from the board.

b. No person shall participate, either directly or indirectly, in any boxing, wrestling, kick boxing or combative sports exhibition, event, performance or contest, or be a holder thereof, unless the person shall have first obtained a license from the board.

The board shall license all promoters; boxers, wrestlers, kick boxers, combative sports contestants or performers, their managers, scorers and trainers; booking agents; ring officials and other persons the board deems necessary.

c. All licenses shall be for a period of one year, unless revoked for cause, and shall be subject to the provisions of this act and to the rules and regulations adopted pursuant to this act. Before acting upon any application for a license, the board may examine, under oath, applicants or other witnesses. All applications shall be on a form prescribed by the board. The board shall, by regulation, establish fees for the issuance or renewal of all licenses.

d. A license from the board shall not be required of any person in order to conduct or participate in professional wrestling.

4. Section 4 of P.L.1988, c.20 (C.5:2A-6.1) is amended to read as follows:

C.5:2A-6.1 Prohibited officeholding.

4. No board member, employee or agent, including the commissioner, shall hold an office or position in any body, organization, association or federation which is established for the purpose of sanctioning boxing, professional wrestling, wrestling, kick boxing and combative sports exhibitions, events, performances and contests in this State or other states.

C.5:2A-14.3 Professional wrestling events, exhibitions, in casino hotels, requirements.

5. No person, club, corporation, or association, and in the case of a corporation no officer, director, employee or stockholder thereof, who produces, arranges or stages any professional wrestling event or exhibition shall hold or conduct such an event or exhibition in a casino hotel which is licensed pursuant to or is an applicant for licensure pursuant to the "Casino Control Act," P.L.1977, c.110 (C.5:12-1 et seq.) unless the person or entity is licensed as a casino service industry or is an applicant for licensure as a casino service industry pursuant to the "Casino Control Act," P.L.1977, c.110 (C.5:12-1 et seq.) or is registered as a vendor in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Casino Control Commission.

6. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved March 17, 1997.