

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1224



Introduced by REPRESENTATIVES ENRICO A. PINEDA and
MICHAEL ODYLON L. ROMERO, PhD.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Boxing and Combat Sports are unique compared to other professional sports. Primarily, once a fighter enters the ring, his or her main intent is to inflict physical harm to the opposing side. Given the circumstances, the possibility of being severely injured in a professional bout is high. Severe injuries may lead to career ending conditions, or worse, death.

Boxing is a sport that holds a distinct spot in the hearts of the Filipino people. History will tell that our country has produced numerous boxers who have brought great pride to our country, displaying immensity of the Filipino spirit and skills. Professional boxing has produced forty-two major world champions – one of the most in the world. Senator Manny Pacquiao, our "*Pambansang Kamao*" and known as one of the greatest pound-for-pound fighter globally, has inspired a new generation of boxers and combatants in other martial art disciplines, thereby re-igniting the interest of our countrymen to such physical sports. But not all stories involving them are fairy tales and a handful result in sad defeat and worse, financial decrepit.

Despite risking their life and limbs if only to bring honor and pride to our country, our fighters suffer with lack of support and proper attention. There are those who suffer serious injuries and there are those who die because there were no appropriate medical facilities made available during and after the fights. There are Filipino champions, who after winning elusive medals for the country, end up with nothing in the twilight of their lives. This should not be how our mighty boxers and combatants should end up.

This measure seeks to establish the Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission which shall primarily regulate the conduct of boxing and combat sports and likewise, the participation of our professional athletes in the events outside the country. It shall provide for a rule to allow our fighters to rest and recuperate between bouts and receive proper medical care before, during and after stepping inside the ring. It also seeks to establish a social security benefit program tailored specifically for our boxers and combat sports athletes which shall be administered by the state pension fund and a health insurance benefit under the National Health Insurance Program of the PhilHealth, aside from other benefits from the Home Development Mutual Fund and PAGIBIG, wherein all professional boxers and combat sports athletes will be enrolled. There will also be an initiative to ensure that options for alternative livelihood are made available to them if and when they choose to retire from their respective sports.

It is imperative that we begin to give our fighters the appropriate attention and support that they deserve. Our country should not only settle with just one Manny Pacquiao, we should start producing and developing more champions from our pool of young and promising pugs and combat sports fighters who would someday become world-class athletes in their own regard, hopefully to bring home equal or greater glory that our People's Champ has given to our country.

Hence, immediate passage of this measure is earnestly prayed for.



ENRICO A. PINEDA
1PACMAN



MICHAEL ODYLON L. ROMERO, PhD
1PACMAN

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

**AN ACT CREATING THE PHILIPPINE BOXING AND COMBAT SPORTS
COMMISSION AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR**

SECTION 1. Short Title – This Act shall be known as the “Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission Act”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote human liberation and development. The State shall promote excellence in professional boxing and combat sports by establishing a commission that will formulate and implement a national policy for the development and safety of Filipino professional boxers and combatants.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

- (a) *Boxer* refers to an individual who fights another in a boxing match;
- (b) *Combat sports* refer to any of the following or a combination of any of the following:
 - (1) Boxing or fistfighting in any of its styles
 - (2) Kickboxing in any of its styles
 - (3) Any sport, martial art, or activity that involves, in accordance with the applicable regulation, striking, kicking, hitting, grappling, throwing and/or punching opponents
- (c) *Combatant* refers to a person who engages in combat sport as a contestant in professional combat sports contest;
- (d) *License* refers to a document issued by the Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission authorizing a person or entity to perform duties as a privilege connected with professional boxing and combat sports;
- (e) *Manager* refers to a person who receives compensation for service as an agent or representative of a professional boxer or combatant;
- (f) *Permit* refers to a document issued by the Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission authorizing a person or entity to hold, promote or engage in the conduct or operation of a professional boxing or combat sports match;

- (g) *Professional boxer* refers to a boxer who is issued a license or permit by the Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission to fight in a boxing match for a sum of money or other compensation such as a salary or prize money;
- (h) *Professional boxing match* refers to a boxing match between professional boxers who shall receive money or other compensation for fighting in said match, but shall not refer to a boxing contest that is regulated by an amateur sports organization;
- (i) *Professional combat sports match* refers to a sports match between professional sports combatants who shall receive money or other compensation for fighting in said match;
- (j) *Professional sports combatant* refers to a person who is issued a license or permit by the Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission to fight in a professional combat sports match for a sum of money, or other compensation such as a salary or prize; and
- (k) *Promoter* refers to a person, group of persons, or an entity, licensed as such by the Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission and primarily responsible for organizing, promoting, and producing a professional boxing or combat sports match. The term "promoter" does not include a hotel, casino, resort, or other commercial establishment hosting or sponsoring a professional boxing or combat sports match unless – (i) the hotel, casino, resort, or other commercial establishment is primarily responsible for organizing, promoting, and producing the match; or (ii) there is no person or group of persons primarily responsible for organizing, promoting, and producing the match.

SECTION 4. Creation of the Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission. – To carry out the above declared policy, the Philippine Boxing and Combat Sports Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission, is hereby created. The Commission shall be attached to the Office of the President and have the same status as a national regulatory agency.

SECTION 5. Objectives. – The Commission shall have the following objectives:

- (a) To strengthen professional boxing and combat sports in the Philippines and promote the development of world-class professional boxers and combatants; and
- (b) To establish policies related to and regulate professional boxing and combat sports, and protect the welfare of professional boxers and combatants.

SECTION 6. Composition. – The Commission shall be composed of a Chairperson and four (4) members who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines: *Provided*, That the Chairperson and two (2) of the members shall be chosen from the nominees of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), one (1) member chosen from the nominees of the Department of Health (DOH), and one (1) member from the nominees from the private sector.

For succeeding appointments to the Commission, the nominations by the PSC and the DOH shall be submitted to the Office of the President thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the term of office of the incumbents, or within thirty (30) days from the occurrence of any vacancy in the Commission. The nominees shall be of known integrity and shall have nationally recognized experience and comprehensive knowledge in professional boxing and combat sports.

SECTION 7. Term of Office. – The term of office of the Chairperson and the members of the Commission shall be six (6) years: *Provided*, That no vacancy shall be filled except for

the unexpired portion of any term. The Chairperson and members of the Commission may be suspended or removed by the President of the Philippines.

SECTION 8. Meetings and Quorum. – The Commission shall meet regularly once a month and as often as the exigencies of the service may demand, upon the call of the Chairperson or upon the request of three (3) members of the Commission. The vote of a majority of the entire membership of the Commission shall be necessary for the adoption of any rule, resolution, or decision.

SECTION 9. Allowances and Per Diems. – The members of the Commission shall receive a per diem for each meeting actually attended by them at the rates set by the Governance Commission for GOCCs (GCG) pursuant to Republic Act No. 10149, otherwise known as the “GOCC Governance Act of 2011”.

SECTION 10. Powers and Duties of the Commission. – The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- (a) Formulate, initiate, plan, and implement a national policy for the development of professional boxing and combat sports;
- (b) Formulate, review, and update the rules and procedures related to professional boxing and combat sports in conformity with international standards;
- (c) Establish a system of registration and licensing of boxers, combatants, referees, trainers, seconds, cut man and other personnel;
- (d) Establish rules, set requirements, and collect fees for the grant or renewal of a license to a professional boxer, combatant, coach or trainer, promoter or judge or referee, and a permit for a professional boxing or combat sports match;
- (e) Suspend or revoke a license or permit;
- (f) Establish a consultative mechanism which shall provide a forum for continuing dialogue between all stakeholders in the implementation of all laws, policies, programs, and projects relating to boxing and combat sports;
- (g) Act as a quasi-judicial board when it shall deem necessary to initiate, hear, and decide any investigation for any violation of its rules and regulations and, in connection therewith, issue *subpoena* and *subpoena duces tecum*;
- (h) Determine and set a safety standard for and ensure that emergency medical personnel and services are available in every professional boxing match and combat sports in the Philippines;
- (i) Maintain an integrated registry of professional boxers, combatants, coaches, trainers, judges, referees, and promoters;
- (j) Seek or request the assistance and support of any government agency, office or instrumentality including government-owned and -controlled corporations, local government units as well as nongovernmental organizations or institutions in pursuit of its policies;
- (k) Establish and maintain linkages with international boxing and combat sports organizations or institutions and counterpart agencies of foreign governments in order to facilitate and ensure the participation of Filipino professional boxers and combatants in international events;
- (l) Allocate resources for the implementation of national policies related to boxers and combatants;
- (m) Submit an annual report on the implementation of this Act to the President and to Congress; and
- (n) Perform such other functions as may be necessary to effectively and efficiently carry out the provisions of this Act. The functions of the Games and Amusements

Board (GAB) as well as other entities related to boxing and combat sports are hereby transferred to the Commission.

SECTION 11. Secretariat. – The Commission shall have a secretariat, which shall be headed by an Executive Director and such other technical and administrative staff as may be determined by the Commission. The secretariat shall implement the policies and programs approved by the Commission and administer its day to day functions. The salaries, allowances, and other emoluments of the secretariat shall be determined by the Commission in accordance with civil service rules, the salary standardization law, and other relevant and existing laws.

SECTION 12. Physical and Medical Examination Requirements. – No person may arrange, promote, organize, produce, or fight in a professional boxing and combat sports match without a physical and diagnostic examination for each participating professional boxer or combatant conducted by a licensed physician accredited by the Commission who certifies that the boxer or combatant is physically fit to safely compete.

SECTION 13. Mandatory Rest Period. – There shall be an interval between boxing contests and combat sports matches which shall be referred to as mandatory rest period. The duration of the mandatory rest period shall be determined by the Commission

SECTION 14. Emergency Medical Services. – A professional boxing and combat sports match may be held only if:

- (a) A licensed practicing physician, whose services are paid by the promoter and duly registered with the Commission, is continuously present at the ringside of the professional boxing and combat sports match;
- (b) Ambulance services, including oxygen tanks and other medical personnel equipped with appropriate resuscitation equipment, are continuously present within the immediate vicinity of the ring; and
- (c) A tertiary hospital is near the vicinity of the event: *Provided*, That a memorandum of agreement shall be executed between the promoter of the professional boxing and combat sports match and the hospital to ensure that the injured boxers and combatants shall be attended to in their facility with dispatch.

The absence of any of the aforementioned requirements shall be a cause for the cancellation of the permit to hold the professional boxing and combat sports match.

SECTION 15. Social Pension and Health Care Benefits. – All professional boxers and combatants shall be enrolled in the Social Security System (SSS), National Health Insurance Program – Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), and the Home Development Mutual Fund or PAG –IBIG, and shall be entitled to all the benefits in accordance with the pertinent provisions of law. The SSS shall develop and administer a separate social security program for boxers and combatants. This program may have different contribution, pension, and other benefit schemes. The premium payments or contributions shall be shouldered by the promoter of the professional boxers and combatants.

SECTION 16. Boxing and Other Combat Sports Officials. – All the boxing and combat sports officials involved in any match shall not receive funds or compensation in any form, directly or indirectly, from the promoter or its agents. Such funds or compensation shall be coursed through and collected by the Commission for appropriate disbursement.

SECTION 17. Alternative Livelihood Programs for Retired and/ or injured Professional Boxers and Combatants. – The Commission, in coordination with various stakeholders in the boxing and combat sports industry, shall establish an alternative livelihood training program and referral system.

SECTION 18. Appropriations. – The amount of needed to fund the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 19. Boxers and Combatants Welfare Development Trust Fund. – There shall be an independent and separate trust fund established under this Act to be administered by the Commission and exclusively used for the welfare benefits of professional boxers and combatants. The Commission shall be authorized to receive grants, donations, or endowments, whether from domestic or foreign sources, for purposes related to its functions, which shall accrue to the fund: *Provided*, That in cases of donations from foreign governments, acceptance thereof shall be subject to the approval of the President of the Philippines upon recommendation of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

SECTION 20. Transitory Provision. – Pending the organization of the Commission, the GAB shall continue to exercise its duties and functions in relation to professional boxing and combat sports. Such amount under the Boxer's Welfare Fund under the GAB shall thereafter be transferred to the Boxers and Combatants Welfare Development Trust Fund of the Commission and shall form part of the initial appropriations of the Commission.

SECTION 21. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). – The Commission, in consultation with the DOH, Department of Education (DEPED), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Finance (DOF), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), PhilHealth, Social Security System (SSS), and other concerned agencies shall promulgate and issue the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this Act within sixty (60) days upon its approval: *Provided*, That failure to promulgate the IRR shall not prevent the implementation of this Act upon its effectivity.

SECTION 22. Repealing Clause. – Section 7 of Executive Order No. 392, series of 1950, is hereby amended. Any other law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, rules or regulations, or parts thereof not consistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 23. Separability Clause. – If any part or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 24. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation

Approved,