

TESTIMONY FROM REX THOMPSON – 2/16/2021 – MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

(Ret.) Iraq Combat Vet. 36 years martial arts. Kru muay thai, multiple black belts. Prior to injuries, was amateur, then pro fighter. Competed regionally/ nationally & internationally. Fought in some of the earliest u.s. fighting promotions; combat zone, finney's championship Thai boxing (St. Louis, MO), warriors cup, IKF & USKBA events, etc...Trained 6x in Thailand, Certified by the Kru MuayThai Association/Accredited by Thailand's Ministry of Culture, as an International Coach of Muay Thai & Muay Boran (Bangkok, Thailand). I assisted in the creation of the unified rules of Muay Thai with Nick Lembo (Boxing Commissioner State of NJ), which was presented at the Annual Association of Boxing Commissioners Convention Aug 3, 2011 - Washington, DC. Promoter of VT's 1st Thai Boxing and 1st split mma/thai boxing event: Mayhem Fighting Championship 2008*. Former owner of United Fighting Arts Institute. Former mma/thai referee, former mma/thai judge. Was scheduled to meet with Teri White at the OPR office years ago for a set of 4 meetings on mma & kickboxing sanctioning panel that were cancelled i believe in 2009?

*3rd party sanctioning or state run sanctioning is needed. BUT not limited to the USMTA only. Fair-market should mean the promoter could use any 3rd party sanctioning body he wants, for example purposes: IKF, WBC, WMTC, etc...

*Promoters should be vetted/licensed by state. If not, the promoter could be a risk to fighter health and safety.

*NONE of these rules should pertain to ANY traditional martial arts that do not employ full-contact strikes to the head/body/legs. If the wording isn't VERY clear, all traditional arts such as; Karate, Taekwondo, Judo, Jiu Jitsu business could all be very negatively affected here in VT.

*More clarification in the wording if these new OPR rule changes will apply to AMATEURS, PROFESSIONALS or BOTH PRO/AM and how to differentiate these from traditional amateur martial arts athletes that don't engage in full-contact fighting. (As these wording(s) issues have been a problem in the past).

*Closing Remarks; shows, up until very recently here in VT, (they have been run since 2008) have had 0 liability claims, 0 severe injuries, extremely professional staff, appropriate medical staff and sanctioning, (Mayhem event was officially sanctioned by the usmta & vmta). Now that those shows have come and gone and with no clear sanctioning, it has created a vacuum where promoters with no experience can hold events and put the athletes health at real risk. On the opposite side of that spectrum is Rex Thompson who has been spear-heading this new generation to carry the torch in pushing VT for clear sanctioning. MMA & Muay Thai are the fastest growing cage & ring sports in the world. Its time VT gets with the program like all other u.s. states have. Fighter safety must be paramount. I think its time the state should utilize people here within VT who already have a tremendous amount of experience in this field and create a "combat sports panel" to give feedback, recommendations/further guidance to the state on combat sports related issues.

I thank you for your time in this matter.

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Sincerely,

Kru Chris Ballard
U.S. Army (Ret)