



Scott Walker, Governor
Laura Gutiérrez, Secretary

DATE: August 29, 2017

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Labor and Regulatory Reform
The Honorable Steve Nass, Chair

FROM: Nate Yahn, Legislative Advisor
Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services

SUBJECT: Clearinghouse Rule 17-016 (unarmed combat sports)

Chairman Nass and Committee Members:

The Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) would like to provide some important background information to committee members regarding Clearinghouse Rule (CR) 17-016. CR 17-016, the department's proposed final draft permanent rule under ch. SPS 192, relates to unarmed combat sports, and was submitted to the Legislature for review on July 14, 2017. This proposed permanent rule complies with and implements 2015 Wisconsin Act 277 (Act 277), which extended the current law regulation in Wisconsin of mixed martial arts fighting to all "unarmed combat sports", and granted DSPS explicit rule-making authority under s. 444.22, Stats., to implement and enforce these regulations.

In accordance with existing state statute, DSPS is responsible for the enforcement of regulations relating to unarmed combat sports within Wisconsin. As defined in s. 444.01(5), Stats., *unarmed combat sports* means "any form of fighting in which the objective is for a contestant to injure, disable, or incapacitate one's opponent, but does not include any fighting in a contest for which the rules prohibit a contestant from striking an opponent's head."

Prior to Act 277, the regulations prescribed under Wisconsin law covered professional boxing and mixed martial arts fighting. In accordance with Act 277, CR 17-016 expands the existing regulations to include professional and amateur kickboxing and Muay Thai, and also provides a means for approval of other unarmed combat sports. The proposed permanent rule also updates the regulations for professional boxing and mixed martial arts fighting to reflect current regulatory practices, which will provide greater consistency in the regulation of all unarmed combat sports in Wisconsin.

Assisting and advising the department on this particular rule promulgation was the Unarmed Combat Sports Code Advisory Committee, which was created as a result of Act 277. On April 21, 2017, the department held a public hearing on both the emergency rule, EmR1705, and the permanent rule, in which no public comments or testimony was received. The Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR) also recently granted a 60-day extension for EmR1705, which extended the emergency rule through October 15, 2017.

The subject matter of the proposed permanent rule, CR 17-016, is clearly a matter of statewide importance. Completing this rule promulgation will ensure that the enforcement of these regulations by DSPS is continued and the safety and welfare of the public is maintained.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (608) 267-9794.