

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN McCAIN
CHAIRMAN, SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING
ON REFORM OF PROFESSIONAL BOXING INDUSTRY
MAY 23, 2001**

- I am pleased to convene this morning's hearing to review the professional boxing industry. As you may know, I have been an avid fan of the sport of boxing for most of my life, but I am very concerned – a concern shared by many of the sport's leaders – regarding the often unscrupulous behavior of some of its participants. Boxing is an immensely difficult activity that tests the physical skill and mental limits of its competitors. It is an honorable sport that should be admired by its fans, but in recent years boxing has been sullied by misconduct.
- Professional boxing is the only major sport in the United States that does not have a strong, centralized association or league to establish and enforce uniform rules and practices for its participants. There is no widely-established union of boxers, no collective body of promoters or managers, and no consistent level of state regulation among the state athletic commissions.
- For the past six years, this Committee has taken steps to reform professional boxing by passing two pieces of legislation, the Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996 and the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act of 2000, both of which have been enacted into law. The 1996 Act established a minimum level of health and safety requirements to protect the welfare of the athletes who sustain the sport, while the primary focus of the Muhammad Ali Act was to protect boxers from the sometimes exploitive, oppressive and unethical business practices of promoters, managers, and sanctioning organizations. The Muhammad Ali Act also provided assistance to state boxing commissions to provide more effective public oversight of the sport.
- Today's hearing will focus on the effects, if any, these federal laws have had on the industry, and whether additional federal, state, and private sector reforms are needed to further improve the sport.
- The witnesses before the Committee today represent members of the boxing industry who care deeply about the current state and future of the game, and I thank them for being here.

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