

**Melanie S. Griffin**, Secretary

**Ron DeSantis**, Governor

April 20, 2026

To: United States Senate, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

**Ref: Return to Your Corners: Have Federal Boxing Laws Gone the Distance or Slipped the Job**  
**Commentary by Timothy Shipman**

For the record, my name is Timothy Shipman, and I serve as Executive Director of the Florida Athletic Commission within the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation. I also serve as President of the Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports, representing 56 regulatory bodies across the United States. My background includes 21 years of honorable Service in the United States Marine Corps and 20 years working in combative sports as a regulator, holding positions as Inspector, Chief Inspector, Timekeeper, Coordinator, Assistant Executive Director and now Director of the Florida Athletic Commission. My testimony today reflects these experiences and is intended to provide information regarding the implementation and potential impacts of the Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act along with information about the current state of boxing regulation.

The Florida Athletic Commission is responsible for regulating professional boxing, kickboxing, and mixed martial arts within the state. Florida remains one of the most active combative sports markets in the nation, consistently ranking among the top states for event volume and hosting major national and international promotions. Just as importantly, we pride ourselves on being a leader in fighter health and safety. Florida maintains significant medical requirements and oversight standards, including mandatory ringside physicians at all events, robust pre-fight medicals, and strong post-bout monitoring procedures.

These safety measures have produced real-world results. For example, during an event last year, a fighter collapsed in the ring after the final bell. Because Florida requires a ringside physician to be present and immediately available, and not simply on call, the doctor was able to initiate lifesaving care within seconds. The fighter survived because of safeguards Florida has put in place. This is precisely why strong medical standards matter. The legislation before you proposes significant updates to the federal framework governing professional boxing, including provisions related to fighter safety, compensation, organizational structure, and federal–state coordination. My testimony today will focus on how these changes may function in practice and their potential impact at the state level.

Beginning with safety, the bill includes several enhancements that align with and, in some cases, exceed Florida’s already high standards. These include medical testing protocols, minimum insurance coverage, and additional anti-doping measures. The legislation establishes national minimum standards for fighter compensation, medical care, drug testing, and insurance coverage. These provisions may promote greater uniformity across jurisdictions and when implementing will introduce additional operational and financial considerations for both commissions and promoters.

With respect to implementation, each state will need to update rules, procedures, and administrative frameworks to reflect the bill's requirements. In Florida, we estimate an implementation timeline of approximately three-to-six months, depending on the timing and clarity of the final federal guidance.

Additionally, the bill introduces structural reforms, most notably the creation of Unified Boxing Organizations (UBOs). These entities are intended to expand pathways for fighters to compete, improve compensation, increase access to medical care, and promote greater transparency across the sport. UBOs may also offer more consistent access to training opportunities. Ultimately, UBOs are designed to enhance fighters' ability to succeed while reshaping the traditional framework of professional boxing. From a regulatory perspective, this represents a substantial shift. States will require clear guidance on how UBOs integrate with existing licensing, event approval, and oversight systems. Effective coordination between federal standards and state regulatory authorities will remain essential to prevent duplication and avoid conflicting requirements.

Ultimately, the overall impact of this legislation will depend on its final structure, the extent of federal guidance, and the level of coordination with state regulatory bodies. Adequate time, clarity, and flexibility for states are essential for a smooth and effective transition. In closing, Florida stands ready to work with federal and state partners to implement any enacted requirements in a manner that supports effective oversight and promotes the health and welfare of participants.

If you have any questions or need any further information, don't hesitate to get in touch with the Florida Athletic Commission at (850) 488-8500 or email me directly: [timothy.shipman@myfloridalicense.com](mailto:timothy.shipman@myfloridalicense.com)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Timothy L. Shipman".

Timothy L. Shipman