

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

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Before the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Hearing on the *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act*

Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and distinguished Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the state of boxing.

My name is Nick Khan. I serve as President of WWE, help run Zuffa Boxing, and I am a board member of our parent company, TKO Group Holdings. I am also a lifelong fan of boxing, which makes the current state of the sport all the more difficult to witness.

I am here because I believe this Committee can help accomplish something historic: revive what was, for generations, a beloved American institution, a sport once dominated by American athletes at both the amateur and professional levels, by supporting the *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act*.

The *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* is a direct response to a problem Congress itself identified a quarter century ago, a problem that has, unfortunately, become worse, not better.

My testimony today focuses on three key areas:

First, boxing’s storied history. Before we can restore boxing’s status as an iconic American sport, it is important to recall what it once was, for many of us, in our *own* lifetimes.

Second, what went wrong with the sport. Again, a decline Congress anticipated 26 years ago when it last passed the original Ali Act.

Third, a new solution. *The Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* can help revive one of America’s great sports institutions in the name of one of America’s great sports and civil rights icons. This legislation would provide boxers with better health and safety protections, greater compensation, and the freedom to choose their own career path. It would also benefit the professional boxing ecosystem and local communities by encouraging and incentivizing new promotions to produce more events in the United States.

PART I: WHAT BOXING WAS — THE SPORT AMERICA BUILT

Fifty years ago, during America’s Bicentennial in 1976, boxing was already at the center of American culture, and the engine behind it was the Olympics. For generations, the Olympics were where boxing champions were made, where the public first fell in love with the athletes, and where the sport’s economic power was born. Cassius Clay won gold in Rome in 1960. Joe Frazier won gold in Tokyo in 1964. George Foreman won gold in Mexico City in 1968. The 1976 Montreal team produced Sugar Ray Leonard, Leon Spinks, Michael Spinks, and Howard Davis.

Sugar Ray Leonard was a household name before he threw his first professional punch. The Olympics pipeline minted stars.

Those stars made boxing the most culturally and economically dominant sport in America. Ali's fights were national events: 300 million people watched the "Fight of the Century" in 1971; 700 million watched the "Thrilla in Manila" in 1975. In 1980, Sugar Ray Leonard earned \$8 million for a single fight — more than any baseball, football, or basketball player made that entire season. In 1988, Mike Tyson earned more in purses than the entire rosters of the Los Angeles Lakers and the Boston Celtics combined. Talent follows money. The best athletes in America chose boxing because boxing rewarded them best. And boxing rewarded them best because the Olympic pipeline kept delivering talent that the public wanted to see.

Consider what that Olympics boxing pipeline produced from 1984-2004:

- 1984: Nine American Olympic gold medalists, including Pernell Whitaker and Meldrick Taylor, with Evander Holyfield taking home the bronze.
- 1988: Roy Jones gets robbed of the gold. Riddick Bowe medals. Ray Mercer takes home the heavyweight gold medal.
- 1992: The Golden Boy Oscar De La Hoya wins gold.
- 1996: The Atlanta games. David Reid wins gold. Floyd Mayweather goes home with a bronze medal.
- 2000: No American boxer wins gold.
- 2004: Andre Ward brings home the gold.

Alarming, the United States has not won a men's Olympic boxing gold medal in 22 years. If our championship pipeline is not rebuilt, we'll find ourselves spectators in our own stadium in Los Angeles at the Summer Olympics in 2028.

PART II: WHAT BOXING HAS BECOME — A SPORT IN MANAGED DECLINE

The Numbers Tell the Story

The contrast between boxing's past and present is not a matter of nostalgia. It is quantifiable, measurable, and stark.

Consider the 1984 Olympic team that I just referenced. American boxers won a record nine gold medals at the Los Angeles Games that year, with most of those athletes becoming huge stars as professionals competing on cable and network television. A mere twenty years later, at the 2004 Athens Games, an American male won his last gold medal in boxing — a time before the iPhone was invented. By comparison, Uzbekistan won five gold medals at the Paris Summer Olympics in 2024. My great respect to Uzbekistan — a country of 36 million people — but something has gone terribly wrong in American boxing that has dried up our previously prolific Olympic talent pipeline.

The media picture is equally sobering. HBO was synonymous with boxing for decades. From its first fight broadcast in 1973 — George Foreman versus Joe Frazier, a seismic bout that launched the network's sports identity — through the early 2000s, HBO made boxing cinematic and essential. In 2018, HBO ended its boxing coverage entirely. NBCUniversal followed three years later, airing its final bout in 2021. In 2022, Fox went dark on boxing as well. Showtime did the same the following year. And in the summer of 2025, ESPN let its regularly scheduled boxing contract expire, closing the book on more than eighty years of boxing on American broadcast and cable television.

As the boxing writer Dan Rafael put it in 2025, “There will be no regularly scheduled boxing on linear TV in the U.S. for the first time essentially since the 1940s when TV became widely accessible. Shame on the stewards of the sport who let it happen.”

Today, boxing in the United States exists almost entirely on an expensive, not widely known paid streaming service that also offers pay-per-view fights. Zuffa Boxing was fortunate, securing Paramount to partner with us on the vision we present here today.

Prospective and casual boxing fans have no point of entry. They disappeared years ago, along with all those boys and girls who might have found their dream, their purpose, or perhaps even a championship title, in the sport of boxing.

Congress Diagnosed This Problem 26 Years Ago

What is remarkable is that Congress saw this coming and said so plainly back in 2000. The very first finding of the original Ali Act reads:

“Professional boxing differs from other major, interstate professional sports industries in the United States in that it operates without any private sector association, league, or centralized industry organization to establish uniform and appropriate business practices and ethical standards.”

That sentence is both a diagnosis and a prophecy. Every other major American sport — the NFL, the NBA, MLB, the NHL — has a league that sets rules, enforces standards, manages competition, develops talent, and creates conditions under which stars can emerge. Indeed, that is the essence of their business. Boxing has never had such a structure. Instead, it has experienced a proliferation of competing sanctioning

bodies — the WBC, WBO, IBF, and others — each with its own rankings, its own titles, its own financial arrangements, and, frankly, many cases of documented corruption. The interests of the sanctioning bodies frequently and almost invariably conflict with the interests of boxers and fans.

While the 2000 Ali Act identified the problem, it didn't solve it. The law established baseline protections for boxers — important and valuable ones — but did not create the first thing any credible sport needs: structure. Boxing has no clear path by which a boxer can compete for a championship, no coherent narrative for fans to follow, and no set schedule for broadcasters or prospective advertisers to build a trustworthy product.

The result, 26 years later, is a sport that has declined in precisely the ways Congress foresaw. The sanctioning bodies, which traditionally look to the promoters for funding and financial favors, have proliferated. Boxer rankings have been manipulated — arbitrary at best, but more often, downright crooked.

American boxer Terence Crawford beat future Hall of Famer Canelo Alvarez last September by unanimous decision to win The Ring Magazine championship and all four of the sanctioning body titles. He was the unanimous 168-pound champion of the world — until the WBC unilaterally stripped Crawford of his belt because Crawford refused to pay their \$300,000 sanctioning fee. Imagine the Los Angeles Dodgers winning the World Series only for Major League Baseball to strip them of their championship because the Dodgers didn't pay MLB a fee for the honor of winning their title. That's business as usual in boxing.

The biggest fights, once watershed, cultural-defining events, have become nearly impossible to make, as boxing's economy has only grown more fragmented and conflicted since the original Ali Act was passed. It took longer to make a single fight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather than it took for Ali and Joe Frazier to stage the greatest trilogy in the history of sports. Fans began clamoring for Mayweather-Pacquiao back in early 2009, but it didn't happen until May 2015, when each man was well past his prime. What was lost in those six years? How many fans? Unlike other sports, boxing has no mechanism to ensure that the best fight the best. Champions who might otherwise capture the public's imagination are often kept from each other by competing promotional interests.

PART III: THE SOLUTION: WHAT THE *MUHAMMAD ALI AMERICAN BOXING REVIVAL ACT* DOES, AND WHY IT WILL WORK

Finishing What Congress Started

The *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* is built on a simple premise: Give boxers the freedom to choose to compete in a better system. It creates a framework for Unified Boxing Organizations — UBOs — to provide the functions that every other major sport takes for granted: promotion, talent development, and the enforcement of consistent standards.

A UBO is not a governing body. It is not a mandate. It is an alternative, a higher-standard pathway. Boxers are free to participate or not. Importantly, it finally addresses Finding #1 from the 2000 Ali Act. For the first time, both boxers and fans would have the option of a centralized organization — one that can establish uniform standards in crucial areas including safety, anti-doping, and anti-conflict of interest rules, and create conditions by which boxing can again thrive. A structure that serves

the consumers while protecting the athletes and offering coherent, merit-based opportunities with the best ultimately fighting the best.

What the *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* Delivers for Boxers

Here's what this bill actually does for boxers who step into the ring. It provides:

- Minimum pay of \$200 per round — a floor that exceeds the minimum in 49 states (and equals that of California), ensuring that boxers at every level receive baseline compensation for putting their bodies on the line.
- Mandatory injury insurance of \$50,000 per bout at no cost to the boxer. Today, thousands of professional boxers compete with no insurance at all.
- A 6-year cap on promotional contracts — roughly comparable in duration with rookie contracts in Major League Baseball, the NFL, and the NBA — that would end the practice of binding boxers to promoters for their entire careers and give them a genuine path to free agency.
- The right for boxers to contact other promoters in the final 30 days of a contract: a right that exists on paper under the current system but has rarely been granted to most.
- Anti-benching protection: \$2,000 compensation for boxers who go six months without a scheduled bout. This closes one of the most abused loopholes in the sport: the widespread practice of signing boxers only to keep them inactive, thereby preventing them from fighting for other promoters.
- Standardized pre-fight medical clearances: annual physical, dilated eye exam, EKG, HIV and hepatitis antibody panels, and annual brain MRI — with enhanced neurological protocols for boxers age 40 and older. These are standards every boxer deserves. Currently, they vary dramatically by state.
- Drug testing for all title bouts and random testing covering at least 50% of other bouts, with mandatory public disclosure of test results and sanctions.

- Annual Association of Boxing Commission report cards grading each state boxing commission on compliance — bringing accountability to a regulatory patchwork that has long operated in the dark.

Additionally, the *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* does not just benefit boxers. It has been endorsed by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and America's largest arena operators, including Madison Square Garden Entertainment Corp. and MGM Resorts International, because they recognize the economic benefits that marquee professional boxing events can bring to their communities.

Moderate to large-scale boxing events can be local economic engines for host communities. Local workers are employed in functions including event operations, hospitality, and security. In addition, neighboring businesses, including restaurants, bars, and hotels, see spikes in revenue due to the increase in consumer spending from local fans and out-of-town visitors.

By bringing more boxing cards to venues nationwide, communities around the country can share in these economic benefits.

A Word on the UFC, Competition, and How Sports Get Built

We are excited about the prospect of an alternative system that will give fans and boxers more choice and greater opportunity. Anyone can start a UBO, and no one will have a special advantage. In the case of MMA, it was illegal or unregulated in many states just 20 years ago until the UFC embraced regulation and created an infrastructure. The UFC worked state by state, painstakingly helping to build the foundation of a sport: establishing safety standards, licensing requirements, uniform

rules, athletic commission oversight, and consistent enforcement of those standards across jurisdictions. It took years. It was not glamorous. But the beneficiaries of that effort are broad; they include the fans, the athletes, and the multiplicity of professional MMA leagues that now exist in the United States and around the world.

The *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* does not seek to eliminate competition in boxing; rather, it seeks to create the conditions under which genuine competition can flourish. The UBO framework is open to any qualifying promoter. Multiple UBOs can exist. Promoters including Golden Boy, Top Rank, and MVPW could each form a UBO. Any organization willing to meet the boxer-protection standards in this bill is eligible. This is not a bill written for a single company. It is written for a sport.

The few critics of this bill seem to be the beneficiaries of boxing's current, conflicted, and fragmented structure — promoters and sanctioning bodies whose revenue depends on the dysfunction that the *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* would remedy. Their opposition is understandable. But their interests are not those of the boxers or the fans.

On the Sanctioning Bodies

The sanctioning bodies — the WBC and the IBF in particular — oppose this bill. Their opposition is easy to understand, as the *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* threatens their dominance over the sport. Their model to put it plainly, is charging boxers for the right to be recognized as champions. The WBC currently counts 163 champions across 18 weight classes in the men's divisions alone. Consider this: Muhammad Ali was the Heavyweight Champion of the World, not the WBC interim emeritus champion of the world. Marvin Hagler was the

Middleweight Champion of the World, not the WBC champion in recess. These organizations exist, in their current form, to sell recognition. Boxers have to pay to play. They do not develop talent, they do not build the sport, and they do not bear any of the costs when a boxer is injured. They simply issue belts and collect fees as a percentage of the boxer's purse — typically 3% each from both champion and challenger. Those fees are not then used to improve the sport, but instead to solely benefit the sanctioning bodies.

One stark example: For the Canelo vs. Crawford fight referenced earlier, the WBC, which purports to be a non-profit entity, insisted on a spacious hotel suite for its President at, ultimately, the cost of the boxers. The WBC also purchased more than \$263,000 of tickets to that fight as evidenced by documents submitted with this testimony.

By contrast, WWE Superstar John Cena has granted more wishes than any other human ever for Make-A-Wish, an outstanding non-profit. For a two-night WrestleMania event just this past weekend at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas, the same exact venue where the WBC purchased \$263,000 in tickets for Canelo vs. Crawford, Make-A-Wish spent just \$2,500 on tickets.

And if there were any doubt about the self-interest of the sanctioning bodies, they put that to rest just over a month ago when the IBF sanctioning body stripped the belt of the universally recognized cruiserweight champion of the world, Jai Opetaia, not for anything he did in the ring, but because the IBF President felt his organization had been slighted at a press conference. These are the so-called stewards of the sport who oppose reform.

This is not a new problem. It's the *same* problem. Now the *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* is a chance to finish what the Ali Act started.

The Moment Is Now

In 2028, the Olympic Games will return to Los Angeles, a storied boxing city that has produced generations of great champions and where Americans won those record nine gold medals in 1984.

In most healthy sports, the professional league and the national governing body work together to produce excellence at every level. The NBA has USA Basketball. The NHL has USA Hockey. Professional leagues *should* invest in young talent, as the resulting pipeline will produce stars who one day will fill their arenas. In turn, those stars inspire the next generation to train harder and dream bigger. It is a virtuous cycle, and boxing is one of the only major American sports that has never had one. We are hopeful that the UBO framework the *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* creates will re-invigorate amateur boxing even as it affords new opportunities to professional boxers.

I was drawn to this sport by the same things that made it great: the individual drama, the history, the improbable journeys of boxers who started with nothing and exceeded their wildest dreams through sheer courage, talent, and discipline. I so vividly recall being 10 years old and watching the 1984 Olympic team, captivated by boxers I knew by their first names — Meldrick, Evander, Pernell. It made me proud of my country. I am the child of immigrants. In many ways, boxing was the agent of my family's assimilation, something I could talk to my grandfather *and* the kids at my school about. Boxing became for me what it had been to generations before mine — an essential part of the American experience. With your support, we

can restore that common touchstone for boxers, communities, and fans across America.

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Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee: I am grateful for your time and for this Committee's commitment to this issue. I am ready to work with you and your colleagues to ensure that the *Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act* reaches the President's desk. I welcome your questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Khan

WWE, Zuffa Boxing, and Board Member of TKO Group Holdings



INVOICE

Customer Mauricio Sulaiman

Name World Boxing Council

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Misc

Date 8/25/2025

Order No. _____

Rep _____

FOB _____

Qty	Description	Unit Price	TOTAL
	Canelo vs. Crawford: 9/13/25 Tickets		
20	Sections A5, A7, A8	\$5,573.00	\$111,460.00
14	Section A8	\$10,093.00	\$141,302.00
20	Section 144	\$523.00	\$10,460.00
	Please Wire Funds to:		
	Name of Bank: Bank of America		
	Name of Account: LV Stadium Events Company, LLC		
	Account Number: 1453535705		
	ABA/Routing Number: 121000358		
	Bank Contact: Gladys Villarruel		
	Officer: Service Advisor		
	Treasury Fulfillment Service Operations (TFSO)		
	Office: 888-715-1000 ext. 21039		
	Email: g.villarruel.svc@bofa.com		
54	Total Tickets		

Subtotal	\$263,222.00
Shipping	
Tax Rate(s)	
TOTAL	\$263,222.00

Payment

Comments _____

Name _____

CC # _____

Expires _____

Office Use Only:

Allegiant Stadium Finance
 Attention: Yonicka Harris
 3333 Al Davis Way
 Las Vegas, NV 89119

Payment Details

World Boxing Council Inc - 980048605

PAYMENT ID: 765

Payment Type Wire - Domestic
Status Approved
Entry Method Freeform
Effective Date 08/27/2025
Transaction Date 08/27/2025
Credit Amount 263,222.00 USD
Debit Amount 263,222.00 USD
Customer Ref INV: EAS0913WBC
Tnum 17379417

DEBIT ACCOUNT

Number x7863
Name World Boxing Council Inc
Type Checking
Bank South

ORIGINATOR INFORMATION

Name World Boxing Council Inc
ID x7863
Type DDA
Country US

BENEFICIARY

Name LV Stadium Events Company, LLC
Address 1 3333 Al Davis Way
City Las Vegas
State NV
Postal Code 89119
Country US
Account x5705

BENEFICIARY BANK

Account Type Other
Bank Code 121000358
Bank BANK OF AMERICA, N.A., CA
City SAN FRANCISCO
Country US

AUDIT INFORMATION

	Timestamp	User ID	Company
APPROVED	08/27/2025 01:50:58 PM	DAZUAJE	980048605
ENTERED	08/27/2025 01:41:49 PM	DAZUAJE	980048605

Continued

REPORT TOTALS

Wires		Total Debit Amount	Payments	Total Credit Amount	Payments
Wires	(USD to USD)	263,222.00 USD	1		

Customer Account Information

Account No: 35358432

Name: Mauricio Sulaiman

Company:

Language:

Address: USA

Acct Type: Personal

Old Acct ID:

YTD Points: 0.00

ITD Points: 0.00

Creation Date: 9/2/2025

Status: Active

Acct Rep: Customer Service

Last Updated: 9/2/2025 10:43 AM **By** KCHIN

Phone Day:

Eve:

Fax:

E-Mail: msalomon@wbcboxing.com

Tag:

SEATING INFORMATION

<u>Event</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Row</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>NS</u>	<u>Full</u>	<u>Purchase</u>	<u>Block Price</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Amount Owed</u>	<u>Prt#</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>C</u>
25BOX	144	26	7 - 26	20	\$523.00	\$523.00	\$10,460.00	\$10,460.00	\$0.00	0	N	N
25BOX	A5	15	23 - 24	2	\$5,573.00	\$5,573.00	\$11,146.00	\$11,146.00	\$0.00	0	N	N
25BOX	A7	15	1 - 10	10	\$5,573.00	\$5,573.00	\$55,730.00	\$55,730.00	\$0.00	0	N	N
25BOX	A7	15	11 - 11	1	\$5,573.00	\$5,573.00	\$5,573.00	\$5,573.00	\$0.00	0	N	N
25BOX	A8	6	5 - 18	14	\$10,093.00	\$10,093.00	\$141,302.00	\$141,302.00	\$0.00	0	N	N
25BOX	A8	15	1 - 7	7	\$5,573.00	\$5,573.00	\$39,011.00	\$39,011.00	\$0.00	0	N	N
Totals				54			\$263,222.00	\$263,222.00	\$0.00			