

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2130 (Haney) – As Amended April 22, 2026

Policy Committee:	Business and Professions	Vote:	19 - 0
	Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism		9 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes the California State Athletic Commission (CSAC) to enter into contracts or agreements to place the name or logo of an approved sponsor, Indian tribe, or nonprofit organization on referee, judge, and ringside physician apparel. The bill directs the proceeds of the contract or agreement towards the Boxers’ Pension Fund and Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) Retirement Benefit Fund, and to CSAC for referee training, payment, and education. The bill also authorizes CSAC to employ an assistant chief athletic inspector.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Authorizes CSAC to employ an assistant chief athletic inspector in charge of training.
- 2) Authorizes CSAC to enter into a contract with an approved sponsor to place the sponsor’s name or logo, as approved by CSAC, on referee, judge, and ringside physician apparel.
- 3) Authorizes CSAC to enter into an agreement with an Indian tribe or a nonprofit organization to similarly display the name, logo, insignia, or brand, as approved by CSAC, of the Indian tribe or nonprofit organization.
- 4) Specifies that a sponsorship payment received by CSAC be distributed as follows:
 - a) 75% of the payment must be split between the Boxers’ Pension Fund and the Mixed Martial Arts Retirement Benefit Fund in a manner that fairly represents the revenue derived from each segment, as determined by CSAC and set forth in the sponsorship contract.
 - b) 25% of the payment must be deposited into the Athletic Commission Fund to be used for referee training, payment, and education.
- 5) Prohibits sponsorship contracts from promoting a sham or fake contest, as defined, or the use of prohibited or illegal substances.
- 6) Requires CSAC, before entering into a contract of agreement, to promulgate regulations establishing and describing the entire procurement lifecycle for contracts and agreements.
- 7) Specifies that a violation of the provisions under this bill is not a crime.

FISCAL EFFECT:

CSAC estimates special fund costs \$197,000 in fiscal year 2026-27 and \$189,000 annually thereafter to support an assistant chief athletic inspector position. CSAC indicates it would hire this position once sponsor revenues for the Support Fund are deemed sufficient.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by CSAC. According to the author:

Fighters step into the ring risking serious, lifelong injuries, yet many retire without the security athletes in other major sports have. [This bill] takes a commonsense step to change that by allowing sponsor logos on referee apparel and directing most of that revenue to fighter retirement funds. It does not raise taxes or ticket prices. It simply ensures that when corporations profit from combat sports, fighters share in that success.

2) **Background.** Existing law regulates and licenses combat sports under the Boxing Act, also known as the State Athletic Commission Act, and establishes CSAC within the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA). Through CSAC, California regulates most forms of professional and amateur combative sporting events, such as boxing and martial arts events, including MMA events. Specifically, CSAC regulates events where the use of full contact may result in physical harm to an opponent, including amateur contests where full contact may be unintentionally used.

CSAC, like other DCA licensing boards, is a special fund entity and receives no support from the state general fund. It instead relies on revenues from licensing, administrative, and other regulatory fees to pay for its costs. However, unlike other DCA licensing boards, CSAC's workload is regulating the events that profit from the fighters' participation. As such, CSAC primarily relies on fees on the revenues from the promoters of the events.

Because CSAC's revenue comes from the event fees and is dependent on the number and size of fights held in California, CSAC's reserve has experienced extreme fluctuations. By raising revenue from sponsor logos on referee and judge apparel, this bill may provide a small offset for the present volatility by supplementing the funding for referee training, payment, and education.

Many professional fighters compete full-time, potentially putting off other career or employment opportunities in the meantime. They also compete on a contractual basis, which may leave them without the usual employer-sponsored benefits one may receive in other sectors, such as retirement benefits. In response to these concerns, California established a pension plan for boxers under the Boxing Act. In 2024, establish the MMA Fund, a substantially similar pension plan for martial artists regulated by the Commission, including MMA fighters, kickboxers, and Muay Thai fighters. The pension plans are funded through assessments on tickets and gate fees. This bill seeks to provide additional funding for the Boxers' Pension Fund and the recently created MMA Fund.

3) **Prior Related Legislation.** AB 1703 (Carrillo), Chapter 591, Statutes of 2023, increased the cap on the dollar amount of admission revenue (gate fee) a combative sports promoter must transfer to CSAC, from \$100,000 to \$200,000.